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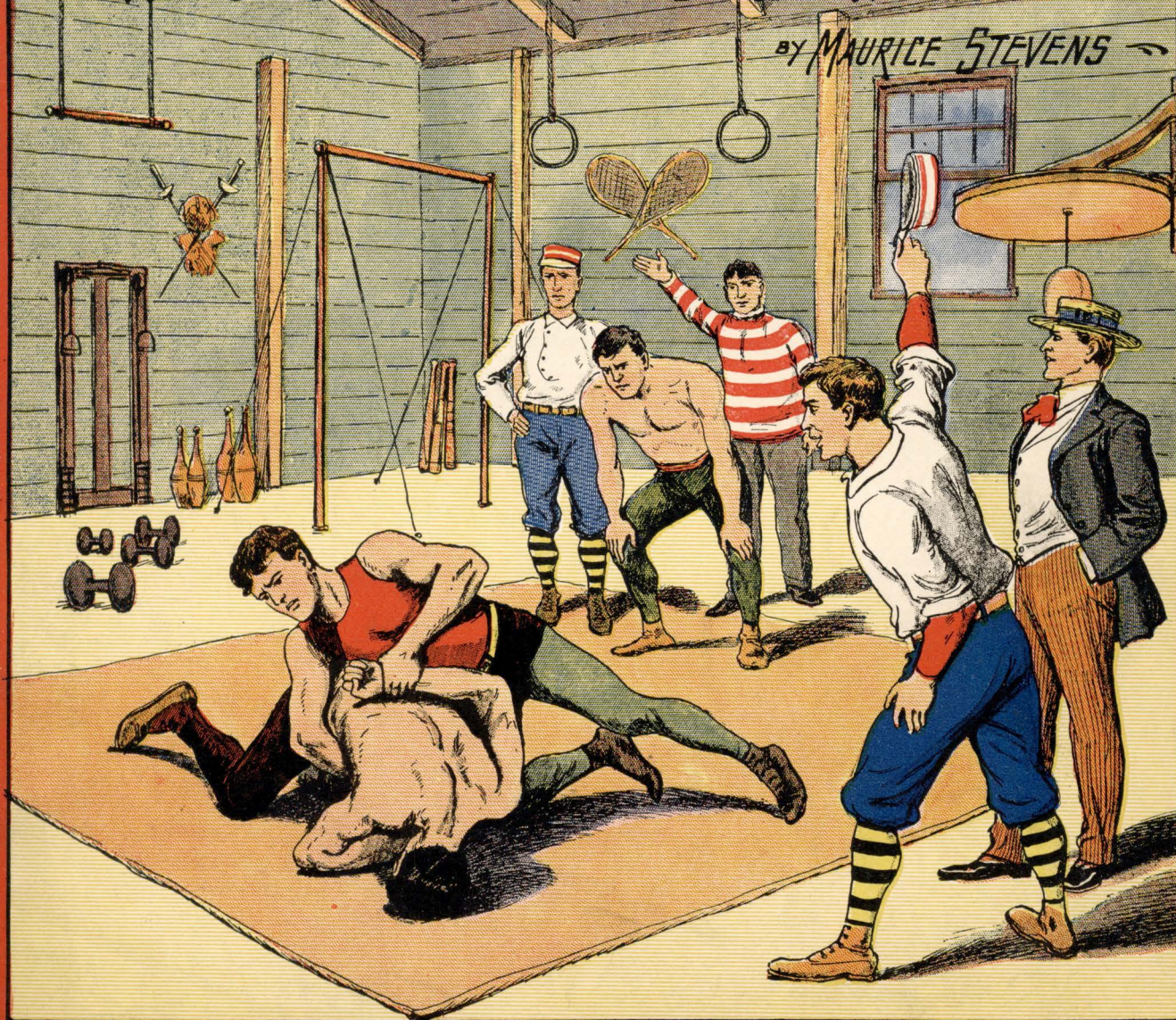
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JACK LIGHTFOOT ON THE MAT

OR THE JIU JITSU TRICK THAT DID NOT WORK

BY MAURICE STEVENS



Like a flash Jack turned the tables on the clever Japanese wrestler, throwing him flat, and fairly sitting on him.

Publishers' Note. "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

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JACK LIGHTFOOT ON THE MAT;

OR,

The Jiu-Jitsu Trick That Did Not Work.

By MAURICE STEVENS

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Jack Lightfoot, the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed of a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports Young America delights in—a boy who in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

Tom Lightfoot, Jack's cousin, and sometimes his rival; though their striving for the mastery was always of the friendly, generous kind. Tom was called the "Book-Worm" by his fellows, on account of his love for studying such secrets of nature as practical observers have discovered and published; so that he possessed a fund of general knowledge calculated to prove useful when his wandering spirit took him abroad into strange lands.

Ned Skeen, of impulsive, nervous temperament, one of those who followed the newcomer, Birkett, being dazzled by the dash of his manner, and the free way in which he flung money around.

Nat Kimball, an undersized fellow, whose hobby was the study of *jiu-jitsu*, and who had a dread of germs.

Lafe Lampton, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved a staunch friend of our hero through thick and thin.

Phil Kirtland, a rival of Jack's, but who is not averse to winning a little glory at times, even if he has to share it with Lightfoot.

Jubal Marlin, one of Jack's friends, with a Yankee love for making money.

Kate Strawn and **Nellie Conner**, two Cranford girls, friends of Jack.

Daisy, Jack's sister.

Mrs. Lightfoot, the mother of our hero.

Matsuki, the Jap instructor in the science of *jiu-jitsu*.

Boraimo, supposed to be a Hindoo, a vengeful man who has a grudge against Jack.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN MATSUKI CAME TO TOWN.

"Gnat" Kimball was in a state of tremendous excitement.

"Whee!" he squealed. "Whoop!"

He threw his cap into the air in his joyous hilarity.

"Oh, this is great!"

He was in his room at home, and on the little stand before him was a letter.

Having whirled round the room like a crazy dervish, he hopped over to the stand and took another look at the letter.

He dug his watch out of his pocket, snapped it open and looked at the time.

"Coming by the next train! Well, won't I show those skeptics a thing or two, after Matsuki's given me a course of training? I guess, yes! I'll do stunts that will make their eyes bug out."

It seemed that little Gnat was to have his revenge on those scoffing members of the athletic club who had

scorned his repeated attempts to teach them the scientific and beautiful art of breaking your neighbor's neck or arm without risk of personal danger.

Nat read the letter again, eagerly:

"MR. NATHANIEL KIMBALL.

"DEAR SIR: I am establishing a class in jiu-jitsu instruction in Cardiff, and shall be pleased to have your assistance in getting some of the people of your town enrolled and interested in this manly and scientific Japanese art. In addition to the regular courses, I shall give what has never before been taught to anyone not a subject of the mikado—lessons that in the past have been given only to the most reliable samurai, and then never given in writing. This method teaches self-defense in its highest and most complete form—teaches how to break an assailant's arm or wrist, his shoulder, or elbow, his back, or even his neck; and how to paralyze his brain by a single touch. I shall be happy to communicate this information to you, and to a few of the honorable young men of your town. Because of its character, I exact from everyone a solemn promise that he will never reveal to anyone these great and perilous secrets, and that he will never use these deadly methods except in self-defense. I shall arrive at your town on the five-o'clock train, and shall go at once to the Cranford Hotel, where I hope to meet you.

"Very sincerely yours,
"OKI MATSUKI."

Gnat Kimball executed another war dance about the room when he had re-read the letter.

"Oh, but I'll show the fellows a thing or two!" he panted. "He'll be here this evening—to-night! Yes, and there's going to be a meeting in the gym to-night. Wonder if I can get him to go down there? Oh, he's got to go! I'll introduce him to Jack Lightfoot, and to Lafe, and all the other scoffers. Won't their eyes shine, when they see him and hear him talk; and won't they stare when he shows them some of his tricks? I'll get him to show them a few things there to-night. It will help to get them interested."

Nat had been in correspondence with Matsuki for two or three weeks.

He had first seen a notice of him in a paper, and had written to him; and then had learned that Matsuki expected soon to try for a school in the city of Cardiff.

Nat intended to attend that school and take the jiu-jitsu lessons from start to finish, and he intended to get as many of the Cranford fellows to join him as he could.

He looked at his watch again.

Then he thrust the letter into his pocket, snatched up his hat, bolted downstairs, and went out into the street.

Little Nat looked very like a Japanese himself. His face was dark, his eyes jet, and his black hair had an oily shine.

Yet his features were not of the Japanese type.

He was rather undersized, but he was supple and well-made, and he was deceptively strong.

Nat was a good deal of an athlete, though the smallness of his size rather hampered him in his contests with the other members of the high-school athletic club.

He had always longed to be an athlete, and his lack of standard physical proportions had been a sore disappointment to him.

No doubt that was the reason why he had turned so enthusiastically to the much-heralded methods of jiu-jitsu.

Almost every day he saw in some newspaper or magazine an advertisement which claimed that even a small man, or a weak one, would be able to whip, or outdo, the largest and the strongest, if he were skilled in jiu-jitsu methods.

Nat was not vindictive. He had no desire to break anyone's neck or arm, had no desire to give anyone a blow at the base of the brain that should bring death; but he did desire immensely to acquire some art or trick that would put him on an equality with the larger and stronger young fellows with whom he daily associated.

When Nat reached the Cranford Hotel, a glance at his watch told him that the train was due, and he decided to hurry on to the station.

While hastening on his way the train came in; and he saw, a moment or so later, a cab leaving the station, and in the cab a dark face that he was sure belonged to the jiu-jitsu instructor.

Little Nat back-tracked, and arrived at the hotel just in time to behold the vanishing coat tails of the Japanese receding up the stairs, following the hotel porter with a "grip."

Nat made a dash for the hotel register.

There it was, in ink not yet dry:

"Oki Matsuki, New York—formerly of Tokio."

Nat's hands trembled as he fished out a card.

Taking the hotel pen he wrote on the card:

"Nathaniel Kimball."

"Here, boy!" he said, proudly and impressively, to a little fellow in blue uniform who was lounging near in a chair. "Take this card to the room of this gentleman."

He pointed to the register where the name showed.

"And be quick about it; and bring me word what he says."

Nat felt generous—he was about to see the great Oki Matsuki; so he fished up a dime and dropped it into the boy's hand, and watched with a smile while the boy vanished in the direction where Nat had seen the receding coat tails of the jiu-jitsu expert.

The boy was back in a minute, and the porter came down with him.

Nat's lean dark face beamed with anxiety and eagerness.

"He says he'll see you!"

Nat could have yelled with delight.

He started for the stairs, and went up them two steps at a time.

The great Oki Matsuki was smiling in the doorway of his room, waiting to welcome the young fellow who had taken the trouble to write to him and who had said he would help him to get pupils from Cranford.

Matsuki was a pleasant-faced Japanese—a rather small man, as Nat was pleased to observe, yet with a certain lithe, quick look that made Nat sure he was all he claimed to be.

"Ah! it is Mr. Nathaniel Kimball," he exclaimed, after glancing at the card Nat had sent up. "You wrote me—yes; I am very glad to see you—very glad."

His brown hand caught Nat's brown hand, and little Nat was drawn into the room by the Japanese, who beamed on him amiably.

It somewhat surprised Nat to discover how well this Jap spoke English. There was a noticeable peculiarity of accent quite impossible to show in print, and sometimes a strange twist of words or sentences, but that only added to the charm of his speech.

Nat sat down, palpitating, in the chair that Matsuki had placed for him.

"This American weather is most beautiful—most grand. It please me, too, to see you. It was the worry to me how I should get you word, and I find my worries foolishness."

He laughed pleasantly, showing his white teeth.

His hair was as thick and black as Nat's, with the same shininess, but it crinkled and waved so much that it was almost curly, and Nat's hair was as straight as an Indian's.

The Jap's eyes were black. In addition, they had a certain color, which can hardly be called dark, in the whites of them; whereas the whites of Nat's eyes were a pure, healthy white. It was but a racial characteristic.

Already Nat felt very much at home with this jiu-jitsu man, who began to talk of the object of his visit to Cranford.

Nat at once opened his heart to Matsuki, telling him why he had become so interested in jiu-jitsu, and what the boys of the town, the most of them, thought about it.

Matsuki smiled.

"They have never seen it—so they do not know."

"That's what I've told them," said Nat.

"That is it—they have never seen it. Also, they have the American pride, which make them think that the American way must be best. But when they see!"

He shrugged his shoulders in a way that Nat wished he could imitate.

"You think you can show them that they're mistaken?"

"Oh, it is easy!"

"Of course I knew you could. But when I tried to do anything they laughed at me; and the worst of it was I never could succeed—they were always too much for me. If I tried to throw one of them he always threw me. But, then, I could only study it out of the books."

Matsuki shrugged his shoulders again in that engaging way.

"That is it," he said. "The book may be good, but it is not like the—the pairsonal instruction. By the pairsonal instruction, you see, you feel, you do the thing yourself, like the master. I"—he tapped his breast—"am the master. I can teach you how to do this thing."

"I can throw the biggest and strongest boy in the athletic club, after I've had your instructions?" Nat asked.

"Sairtainly. Unless"—he shrugged his shoulders again—"that other boy has also had the same instructions. Then, I don't know."

"Well, if I could once—just once—lay Jack Light-foot on his back on the pad I'd be happy."

"Who is he?"

"Oh, course you don't know anything about him; but he's the captain of our athletic club."

Matsuki wrinkled his face in a confident smile.

"Me makes fun of the sytem, eh?"

"Well, yes, somewhat; but he isn't half as bad as some of the others. I guess he doesn't think any better of it than any of the rest; but he never says so much. You see, he's a peculiar fellow that way; he doesn't like to make sport of anyone; and then, besides, he's the captain of the club, you know. That

keeps him down some, I reckon. The captain has to be rather tactful, you see, and not get any of the members mad, or down on him. But he's an athlete. You ought to see that fellow on the pad, sometimes. He's a wonder. If I could wrestle like him, or fight like him, I'd be the happiest boy in Cranford."

"My dear Mr. Kimball! I shall teach you how you can throw this wonder—I shall show you the trick that will tumble him down like the infant."

Nat panted with delight.

"You wouldn't want to show me now? You might give me a hint, you know. I could pay you extra for it; or you could call it part of the first lesson I'm to take. And I'll help you all I can to get pupils. If the fellows should see that I could do something with it, it would be a big thing. The trouble is, that when I've tried it I've always failed, and that's given them a chance to laugh at me and make fun of it."

He looked at Matsuki with glowing eyes.

"But once I didn't fail!"

"Oh, once you threw him?"

"No, not Jack Lightfoot; but once I threw a fellow who I thought was a tramp, who was holding Jack a prisoner. It turned out that the fellow was crazy. If I hadn't thrown him he'd have killed me, I guess. That was pretty good, don't you think, when all the instruction I had was from a book?"*

Matsuki clapped his brown hands together.

"That was most excellent! That is what I shall teach you. How you may defend yourself—how you may kill your enemy, if you wish. It is the great secret of the samurai, what you would call the nobility, of Japan, the leaders of the old fighting clans. It is the wonderful secret, and it is that I shall teach you."

Nat's dark cheeks flushed with joy.

"Oh, I can't wait to begin it! Show me something now; show me some trick or other that I can exhibit to the boys. And if you can teach me how I can put Jack Lightfoot on his back on the mat, it would win the whole athletic club. You could get every member into your class, I know."

"All right!" said Matsuki, smiling, and he rose and began to strip off his coat. "I will give you a little of the instruction right now."

And Nat, peeling off his coat enthusiastically, was ready to take his first lesson in scientific jiu-jitsu, right there in the Jap's room at the hotel.

CHAPTER II.

A TILT OF WORDS.

Cranford was a small town.

Nat Kimball's tongue was a lively one.

Put those two things together, and you will have no trouble in understanding that long before the hour came for the athletic club meeting in the gym that night the news of the arrival of the jiu-jitsu expert was known all over the place.

Nat had learned one or two small tricks which he insisted on trying on every friend he met.

He threw one fellow, and that made him so proud that the streets of Cranford were hardly wide enough to hold him.

He waltzed up to Brodie Strawn and challenged him for a wrestle.

"Oh, go cool down!" Brodie grunted.

"But let me show you!"

"Here on the street?"

"We can go away somewhere—behind that building; I want to show you."

"Go tackle that cow!" said Brodie, with a grin, pointing to a cow in a lot.

Nat flushed.

The papers of a few weeks before had told of an enthusiastic farmer who had taken some jiu-jitsu instruction by mail, and then not finding anyone to try his tricks on had tried them on the cow. The cow stepped on him, kicked him against the side of the barn, lifted him on her horns, and maltreated him generally; and, as a result, so the paper said, the farmer was suing the jiu-jitsu expert for damages.

The boys had joked Nat about this, narrating it at first as the paper had it; but by degrees the story had become so changed that it came to be understood by some people that it was Nat Kimball who had been treated by the cow in such an unladylike way.

Hence, that reference to a cow always flushed Nat's dark face and made him want to shuck out of his coat and whip the fellow that mentioned it.

"Oh, you're afraid I will throw you!" Nat shot at Brodie now. "But come down to the gym to-night. He's going to be there. There's to be an open meeting, to which everyone is welcome, and I've asked him to go down with me. As a member, I've a right to do that. Come down and see him."

Brodie laughed.

"Well, yes; I think I'll go down and see the fun."

Nat was so enthusiastic over Matsuki that he could not wait until the time of the meeting to introduce him to Jack Lightfoot.

*See No. 19, "Jack Lightfoot's Disappearance; or, The Turning Up of an Old Enemy," for the story of Nat Kimball's encounter with Jack's enemy, and the jiu-jitsu trick with which Nat defended himself.

So he waltzed over to the hotel, when he could not wait any longer, and after some talk induced Matsuki to accompany him down to Jack's residence.

They found Jack in the shed room.

Jack knew at once who his dark-faced visitor was.

But Nat proceeded to an elaborate introduction.

"Very much glad to see you," said the Jap. "I have heard the great things of you, from your honorable friend, Mr. Nathaniel Kimball. He insist that I should make the visit with you, and it please me that I have come."

Jack duly expressed his pleasure at the meeting.

He was rather favorably impressed with the athletic Jap, who seemed a clean, lithe fellow of no mean ability.

Jack drew out the easy-chair for him, and gave Nat another, while he sat down on the edge of the workbench.

"Oh, you'll like him!" Nat whispered, his dark eyes shining. "He's great! He's already shown me a few things, and is going to show me some more."

"I am come here at the invitation of Mr. Nathaniel Kimball," said Matsuki, "and he is to give me the kindly help in organizing my jiu-jitsu class. I hope that you may become a member of that class."

He beamed on Jack.

"Nat's a great admirer of your system," said Jack, "and I know he'll do all he can for you; and you'll find him a first-rate fellow, too."

"Oh, if you'd only go into it!" cried Nat. "That would fetch the other fellows."

Jack smiled at Nat's enthusiasm.

"Do you think so?"

"Oh, I know it!"

"When Mr. Lightfoot sees how fine the system is he will also be willing to take lessons," said Matsuki.

"Perhaps," said Jack. "I haven't made up my mind yet that it's superior to the American system."

The Jap shrugged his shoulders.

"The American system lack the science. It is brute strength. The Americans fight so—straightforward!"

He struck at an imaginary foe.

"That's what I like about it," said Jack; "it's straightforward."

"But see what the Japs have done lately!" cried Nat. "Whoever thought that little Japan could whip big Russia? It was like a little man tackling a big one. The little one had science on its side, and the big one was clumsy and slow; and you see the result. Little Japan whipped great, big Russia."

Jack smiled again. Little Nat's enthusiasm was charming.

"That is it," said Matsuki. "That is what we teach in jiu-jitsu; so that the small man may be better than the large man."

"But suppose the large man also learns jiu-jitsu; then what? You teach it to large men as well as small ones?"

The Jap shrugged his shoulders.

"Not all large men will learn it; and for the little ones who do learn it, it will be the great thing."

"Just like little Japan whipping big Russia!" put in Nat.

"Well, did you ever think of one thing, in that connection?" Jack asked. "How long is it since Japan has been able to whip a European nation?"

"Well, not long, of course," said Nat. "It's been only fifty years since Commodore Perry went there and the country was opened up to outside influences."

Jack turned to Matsuki.

"How long have you practiced jiu-jitsu, and your peculiar ways of fighting, in Japan?"

Matsuki spread out his hands.

"Thousands of years. The time is so far back that no one can remember."

"Yet it's only been a very few years that Japan has been able to whip an outside nation."

"Well, they didn't have cannons and all those things—fighting battle ships, and all that, until lately," said Nat.

"Just so, and you've proved what I wanted to say. Japan has lately been able to whip an outside nation simply because she abandoned her ancient method of fighting and took up the art of fighting as it is practiced by the outside nations. Isn't that so? The manner of fighting by which she has whipped Russia she learned from the outside nations. She modeled her battle ships, and her cannon, and her rifles, and trained her men, on European and American plans. That's so, isn't it?"

"Well, what does that prove?" said Nat.

"You admit that she got her ideas of modern fighting from the outside nations?"

"Why, of course."

Nat's face was flushing painfully.

"Well, perhaps it doesn't prove anything," Jack was smiling. "But it shows me that when she has made progress it's been by imitating the outside nations, not by following her own ideas. And in my opinion that applies to jiu-jitsu. I don't believe that

it's superior to the European and American style of wrestling and fighting."

"But see the immense, great advantage it gives the small man!" cried Matsuki, stirred by this to make a protest. "It teaches the small man, the weak man, how he can conquer the big and the strong man. Suppose that a thief come into your house. You jump at him. He is big man, you are small man. You give him the vital touch of the brain, or you break his neck, while he is trying to get hold of you."

"But"—and here Jack smiled again—"suppose he knows all about your jiu-jitsu methods; what's to hinder him from giving me the vital touch, as you call it; what's to keep him from breaking my neck, or striking me at the base of the brain and killing me?"

Matsuki spread out his brown hands in an expressive gesture.

"But you do not understand! These deadly tricks—they are to be taught only to honorable men. I teach them to Mr. Nathaniel Kimball, to you, and to honorable young men only; I do not teach them to thieves and burglars."

He looked indignant.

Jack took a slip of paper from a pigeon-hole of the desk.

"Well, now, what about this?"

He held up the paper; it was a half-page advertisement, cut from a magazine of that month.

"How about this?" he said. "Here is Prof. Nogo Masuri, and this is an advertisement in a magazine that goes all over the United States. He has a school of jiu-jitsu, and teaches it by correspondence. I wrote to him out of curiosity not long ago and got one of his letters."

He put his hand into the pigeon hole and took out the letter.

He read portions of the letter and of the advertisement, and passed them both over to Matsuki that he might see them.

"You see he offers to teach me his methods, by which men may be killed, maimed, wounded; he offers to teach me what he calls the 'Goblin's Grip,' also 'Arm Breaking,' the 'Vital Touch at the Stomach,' 'Vital Touch at the Throat,' 'Vital Touch at the Lower Jaw,' 'Vital Touch at the Base of the Brain,' and many others; all methods by which men may be killed, or so injured that they are ruined for life."

"But, see," said Matsuki, trembling, and pointing to the letter, "he expressly says that these things are to be taught only to honorable men—not to thieves and burglars!"

Jack smiled.

"But he proposes to teach them by mail."

"Yes, but only to men who can be trusted—to men who will use them only in self-defense."

"He will teach them to *me*, he says."

"Sairtainly. You are reliable—you are honest."

"How does he know that?"

Matsuki gasped. He was in the trap which Jack had laid for him.

"How does he know that I am reliable and honest? He has never seen me; I think he has never inquired about me. He sends those advertisements out, and apparently directs those letters to whoever will write to him. How can he know that I am not a thief, and a burglar, and a murderer? He doesn't know, and he can't know. Suppose he takes my money and teaches me. I may be the worst rascal in the world, for all he knows to the contrary. Now, tell me how you're going to keep bad men from learning those deadly tricks? And a bad man, when he learns, can teach other bad men."

"But I do not do that!" asserted Matsuki, warmly.

"No; I'm willing to believe you don't."

"I do not. I select my pupils; I study them after they come to me; and only to the honorable do I impart those secrets."

"Now, for the sake of the argument," said Jack, "we'll grant that you teach only honorable people. Of course, there is a question, arising as to whether you can tell by looking at a man whether he is honorable or will continue to be honorable. But say that you can tell, and that you never teach any but those who will make proper use of this dangerous knowledge. What about other men, who will teach bad men? I am not saying anything against any jiu-jitsu teacher, but simply pointing out how impossible it must be for them to tell whom they are teaching, and to know that none of their pupils will make a bad use of their knowledge. And that's why, or, at least, one of the reasons why, I do not like jiu-jitsu. Then, there's another reason."

Little Nat was genuinely distressed.

He had heard those arguments before, from Jack and other members of the athletic club, and had not been able to meet them himself. He had supposed, though, that they could be met and promptly shown to be false by one who thoroughly understood jiu-jitsu.

"What is this other reason?" Matsuki asked, breathing hard.

He saw he was in a hole, and was anxious to get out, or shift the drift of the conversation.

"The other reason is, that I believe the American

system of wrestling, boxing and fighting is superior to jiu-jitsu; almost as much superior to it as the battle ships which the Japs are now using are superior to their old-style vessels. And it's more honorable; of that I think there can be no doubt. It gives the other man a chance. It isn't sly, and sneaking, and treacherous, and underhanded."

"I do not concede that point at all!" Matsuki shouted.

He was getting excited.

"Nor do I admit that jiu-jitsu is not better than any other system ever taught," he added.

"You have a right to your opinion," said Jack.

"Show him some of those tricks—some that you showed me!" panted Nat, anxiously.

Matsuki shrugged his shoulders.

"It would not be worth the while. Your friend does not want to believe in my system."

Jack did not fail to remember that Matsuki was a caller who was entitled to all due courtesy.

"You must understand that I said I did not think you would do any of the things which I mentioned."

He resumed his position on the edge of the workbench and laughed easily.

"And understand, too, that I am a great admirer of Japan!"

Matsuki's face brightened and Nat began to feel better.

"Japan has shown herself to be a wonder in this war," Jack continued. "Few people believed, at the outset, that she could, in the end, whip Russia; but Americans, I think, as a rule, gave her their sympathies, and were always glad when she achieved a victory."

"Yes, that is so," the Jap admitted. "America has been very generous to Nippon."

"Nippon?" said Nat.

"It is our name for what you call Japan."

"We young fellows here in Cranford," said Jack, "are pleased that Japan whipped Russia. And I hope that you won't think I meant anything personal by what I've said. Nat is my friend, and any friend he brings here I consider also my friend."

Altogether Jack's manner was now so genial and winning that, though he had severely criticised jiu-jitsu, Matsuki was ready to declare that he was a fine fellow.

Of course little Nat was pleased.

And when he departed with Matsuki, he said to the latter:

"Oh, if you could only get him to go into the class, all the other fellows would come in on the run!"

CHAPTER III.

THE MEETING IN THE GYM.

When Matsuki went with Nat that evening down to the gym he had made up his mind to one thing.

He would take down Jack Lightfoot's pride and confidence.

The Japanese was an honest believer in the merits of his system, though he did not approve of many of the things done by some of the jiu-jitsu teachers.

He had discovered that Jack Lightfoot was truly the leader of the athletic youths of Cranford.

He wanted those young fellows to join his classes.

Like other men who have schemes to push, he was after money. Fifteen or twenty dollars apiece for lessons from each of the youths of Cranford was something worth working for.

And he had Nat Kimball to help him and sympathize with him.

Long before the time for the meeting the gym had begun to fill up with an expectant crowd of young fellows, to which was added a sprinkling of older men who had been drawn out by curiosity.

Jubal had the place looking as trim and neat as a pin.

Jubal was janitor, and for keeping the gym in order he had the privilege of using one corner of it for an "office," where he concocted his wonderful business schemes for getting rich.

Jack Lightfoot came rather early, in company with his cousin, Tom; and at about the same time Lafe Lampton and Ned Skeen arrived.

Then, late enough to give the proper effect and impressiveness, Nat Kimball appeared with Oki Matsuki.

The boys looked with great curiosity at the much-heralded Jap, as he came into the room with Nat, bowing and smiling.

"Young gentlemen, very happy to meet you—very happy to meet so many bright, young Americans!"

Nat began to introduce him right and left, and finally conducted him up to Jack Lightfoot.

Matsuki's dark eyes scanned Jack closely.

"Very happy—most happy to meet you again."

He took Jack's hand and shook it warmly.

"And we're glad to have you visit our gym," said Jack.

Matsuki passed round the room with Jack, looking

at the contrivances of various kinds, and at the ornaments on the walls.

"We need not such an array of appliance for jiu-jitsu," he said.

"Oh, we could get along with less," Jack admitted; "but we like the fun of practicing with them."

Nat Kimball, talking with the boys, and boasting of the marvels of jiu-jitsu, had again reached the seventh heaven of delight.

On the way down, Matsuki had communicated to him his plan of forcing Jack to meet him, and Nat had approved of it.

He did not doubt as to which side would win a victory; for, though he admired Jack and had great faith in his ability, he had talked and studied along the jiu-jitsu line so long and had read so many boasts from professors of the system that he believed they were invincible.

"If you Americans think your system so much better than the jiu-jitsu, why does the American Government put jiu-jitsu experts for to instruct the young cadets at West Point and Annapolis?" Matsuki demanded of Jack, as they passed together on round the room. "Can you answer me that? That proves jiu-jitsu is better than what you have."

"It proves that some of the officers, or whoever put those Japanese professors there, thought there was something in jiu-jitsu worth knowing. No doubt there is. I wouldn't want to deny that. Every nation is bound to have some good ideas of athletics. What I most condemned, you'll remember, was the teaching of the murderous part of your system to everybody who would pay."

"But your high government officers, they think well of it!"

"Well, perhaps they don't think so well of it now," Jack retorted, dryly, "since those American wrestlers went down there, challenged some of those professors, and put them out of business, after the professors of your system had loudly proclaimed they could defeat any and all comers. You saw that, I suppose? It was in all the papers."

The Jap subsided again.

He found it pretty hard to get ahead of this well-posted and intelligent young American.

In the meantime, Nat was doing a good deal of missionary work.

He was whispering here and there that some fun was on the tapis.

He hinted that the Jap was going to challenge Jack.

"And then you'll see what jiu-jitsu will do!" he declared.

One of those who overheard him was Jerry Mulligan, the Irish cart driver, who had come down with some of the other outsiders.

Jerry flashed his roll, as he always did when anyone hinted that Jack could be defeated at any old thing.

Jerry seemed to keep a little money about him purely for "bluffing" purposes; yet he would risk it, and risk it recklessly.

"Well, I'm not asking anybody to bet on it!" said Nat.

"But begorra, ye're takin' the Jap's side! That a mumber av Jack's at'letic club would do ut is shammin' me, so ut is!"

The Japanese went about, when he was through inspecting the room, asking various members of the club and the visitors if they didn't want to join the class he was forming.

Nat began to drum for members, too, and some of the boys seemed eager to go into the class.

But a thing that the Jap and Nat met constantly, and which irritated the Jap, was the statement that Jack, and Tom, and Lafe, and some of the others, did not think much of jiu-jitsu.

"Let the Jap show us what he can do!" said big Bob Brewster.

"Well, he could put you on your back on the mat, all right!" cried Nat.

"Perhaps he could; I'm no expert. But could he down Jack?"

"You bet he could, or anyone else here! Why, he's a regular instructor! You don't think a fellow would be a regular instructor, unless he was pretty good at it."

"Well, get him to waltz out onto the floor and show us some of his stunts!" Bob urged.

Nat saw that the time for action had come.

He spoke to the Jap.

The latter faced round.

"My young American friends," he said, while his dark eyes glistened, "it is suggest to me by my young friend, Mr. Nathaniel Kimball, that I shall show you some of the trick of the jiu-jitsu. But I cannot well show them trick without some one to illustrate on. If anyone here will do me the very large favor to meet me, I will quick show the trick."

He looked straight at Jack Lightfoot.

"Meet him; give him all he wants!" whispered Lafe Lampton.

Jack's fair face colored.

He had not come down there to wrestle or combat with the Jap.

"I guess they've got me in a hole now," was his thought.

He saw clearly the position he was in.

With many of these young fellows his success or failure in defeating Matsuki would weigh more for or against the system of jiu-jitsu than anything he could say.

That it ought not to have a feather's weight as evidence made no difference.

Jack was not at all sure that he could defeat this trained Japanese athlete, who was both older than himself and presumably a much more skillful wrestler. Matsuki had devoted his life to scientific wrestling, as taught by the Japanese; while with Jack wrestling was but a side issue; it was not a thing that he prided himself greatly on; though he knew that he was a good wrestler.

Fortunately for him now, he had studied the subject of jiu-jitsu with Tom, as a matter of curiosity; and he knew a good deal about the tricks and holds of the system, and so had a fair idea of what Matsuki would try to do.

Jack hesitated—while that clamor rang out, demanding that he should meet the Jap.

Matsuki stood smiling, confident of his own powers; and sure that in defeating Jack he would go a long way toward securing the favor of these young fellows and getting pupils from Cranford.

Jack's face flushed slowly until it was almost a brick-dust red.

"I don't profess to be able to throw a trained jiu-jitsu wrestler," he said, while that flush stole slowly over his face.

"But you've been running it down!" cried Nat. "He wants to show that you're mistaken about it."

"If Mr. Lightfoot but dare to meet me, I will show him the jiu-jitsu trick that will put him on the mat mighty quick!" the Jap boasted, showing his white teeth in a smile.

Jack's pride leaped to his rescue, like the blast of a bugle.

"All right!" he said, sharply. "I'll meet you! But I'm to have the privilege of using my own methods—the American methods. And, another thing——"

He was looking at Matsuki, his gray-blue eyes now shining bright.

"Any way that the Mr. Lightfoot like," said the Jap, supremely confident.

"We'll make it two best out of three."

Jack was well aware that he might be thrown by some clever tripping trick with which he was unfamiliar, and he thought his chances would be better by making it two best out of three.

"All right!" said the Jap, with his queer accent, still smiling.

"I'll be ready in a minute!"

Jack retired to a dressing room at the end of the gym, and, Matsuki going into another, got ready for the contest.

The gym was now seething with excitement. All the boys seemed to be talking at once, while Jerry was flourishing his roll and loudly offering to bet the whole of it on Jack.

"Cool down, Jerry!" Brodie Strawn advised. "This isn't a horse race."

"Bedad, that Jap felly will be wantin' to run like a horse, before he's t'rough wid Jack."

"Maybe he will; that's what we're going to see now."

CHAPTER IV.

JACK LIGHTFOOT ON THE MAT.

Jack came out, ready for the fray; and at almost the same moment the Jap appeared.

The Jap was still smiling and confident.

They met on the mat in the center of the room, with everyone craning to see what would happen.

Nat Kimball was in a quiver of excitement.

He admired Jack, but he was wildly hoping now that the Jap would win. Never before had little Nat wished that anyone would down Jack, but he was wishing it now.

"Before we begin," said Jack, who hoped to again put the Jap in a hole, "I want you to show these young fellows some of the methods by which arm dislocating, and neck breaking, and other things are done."

Matsuki thought a moment; then his face brightened.

"The secret tricks, by which life can be easily taken, cannot be taught to a miscellaneous crowd, like this; but I think I can show you one way by which I could break your arm and at the same time paralyze your throat. If you will be so good as to lie down on your back on the mat."

"Huh!" grunted Bob Brewster, speaking to Kimball. "That's the way you always did me—asked me to get in some position which would give you all the advantage at the start."

But Jack dropped down on his back on the mat.

Matsuki sat down on Jack's stomach, straddling him by putting a foot on the floor on each side of Jack's body. Then he caught Jack by the throat with his right hand, and taking hold of Jack's right wrist with his left hand drew Jack's arm back until the elbow rested across the Jap's leg near the thigh, with the palm of the hand uppermost.

This position gave the Jap such leverage on the arm that by pushing down on the wrist he could, no doubt, have snapped Jack's arm at the elbow, if Jack had lain still and permitted it; and, of course, at the same time he could have choked Jack.

"You see!" the Jap cried, enthusiastically. "I have you now! I could, by pressure of the throat, your windpipe paralyze, and at the same time break the arm. You see?"

"Yes, I see," said Jack.

Little Nat was hopping with enthusiasm.

"You see how it's done," he said to Brewster; "and that's just one trick."

"I see that Jack didn't try to do anything. I could do that, if Jack would lie down and let me."

"All right," said Jack, now on his feet; "we'll try that for the first attempt; though, of course, if you do get me down, and in that position, you're not to break my arm just because you find you have me in your power."

"Oh, no—no!" protested the Jap. "But I will show you a trick or two."

"Another thing I ask," said Jack, "is that this is not to be an attempt to put either of us on our back; but simply to get the other in our power. If that's agreed, I'm ready. Come, when you want to."

The Jap began to move round Jack, looking for an opening, crouching for a spring; and Jack turned, facing him, with his arms and hands in a defensive attitude.

Even Nat Kimball had ceased talking; a silence like death had come over everyone in the gym. Only the soft pad of the feet of the circling Jap was heard.

Then he leaped in, with the bound of a leopard, striving to get such a hold on Jack that he could throw him without trouble.

Like a flash Jack met the movement. The Jap's hand was knocked aside as if it had been a straw; and Jack, rushing in, succeeded in getting his arm round the Jap's neck. The Jap tried to free himself by a writhing motion, at the same time trying to clutch Jack's throat.

Then Jack seemed to step past him, so quick was his movement, at the same time tightening his hold on the

Jap's neck with his hooked right arm and giving a forward jerk with it, while his left hand caught the right hand of the Jap at the wrist.

Jack's right hip was now the fulcrum of a lever, against which he pulled the Jap's body; and with a quick motion he gave a surge that took the Jap's heels off the floor and sent them flying through the air.

The wrestlers came to the mat together, the Jap having fallen on his side and rolled to hands and knees.

Jack had caught his own right hand—the hand of the right arm which encircled the Jap's neck—and with his body thrown against and upon the Jap he had what American wrestlers call the back strangle hold.

In vain the Jap now writhed and threshed his legs about. He tried to rise with Jack, tried to break that strangle hold, tried to turn over on his side; but he was helpless. Jack simply tightened the strangle hold and had the Jap gasping for breath.

The gym was in a wild tumult.

All the boys were shouting at once, most of them applauding Jack. Ned Skeen had hopped to a chair, and was swinging his cap and yelling. Jerry Mulligan was bellowing his joy in a voice like a fog horn.

Little Gnat's dark face was so red that it seemed purple, and he appeared to be gasping painfully, while his black eyes held almost a frightened light.

The Jap was loath to give up, and he made another struggle; but with that strangle hold secure Jack could defy him to do his worst.

"That—that was not the—the fair hold!" panted the Jap, when he discovered that he was helpless.

"Say 'enough'!" cried Jack.

"Enough!" gurgled the Jap.

Jack released him and leaped to his feet, and the Jap rose from his hands and knees considerably crestfallen.

"Fall number wan!" yelled Jerry. "'Twas to be two bist out av three. Who's wantin' to bet his good money that Jack, the darlint, don't get the nixt wan."

He waved his money.

No one seemed desirous of making the wager.

"You see, young gentlemen, it is this way," panted Matsuki, trying to explain; "I have been practice exclusive the jiu-jitsu system, and that was to me the new trick."

Jack smiled, as he stood there breathing heavily from his exertions. He could afford to smile.

"But you were to show us *your* new tricks," said Bob Brewster, heartlessly.

"Very good; I am ready to show them. It was to be the two best out of three."

The Jap was more wary, when next he sought to down Jack. He had learned a few things in the field of experience and they made him cautious. He saw that Jack Lightfoot was no common young fellow, but a trained and scientific wrestler; and, while the Jap's heart burned with his recent defeat, he was willing to acknowledge that Jack was worthy of his utmost skill, and showed it by the careful manner in which he now made his advance.

The laughing, the shouting, and the tumult had again subsided; and the spectators seemed each to hold his breath.

The Jap tried now to get the hip lock, a thing that is used both in ordinary wrestling and in jiu-jitsu; and, failing in that, endeavored to get a hold from behind, by which he could encircle Jack's body and at the same time pin his arms to his sides.

But when he got behind Jack and tried this last, Jack dropped downward with a sliding motion, freeing his arms, and, throwing them up, clasped them round the Jap's neck, thereby securing what is known as the "head lock."

Again he had the battling Jap foul.

Pitching his own body slightly forward and thus drawing the Jap up on his back, his hands at the same time being locked together behind the Jap's head, which was drawn forward over Jack's shoulder, Jack hurled the Jap headlong to the floor.

The Jap, writhing round to prevent this fall, struck on his shoulder, instead of on his back, his head and arm being half doubled under him; in which position Jack leaped upon him, half sitting on him and holding him down.

Matsuki had tried to get that clever jiu-jitsu back hold; but, like a flash, Jack had turned the tables on the clever Japanese wrestler, throwing him flat and fairly sitting on him.

A wild yell again bellowed forth from the spectators.

The Jap tried to rise, struggling desperately.

The discovery that he had more than met his match in this clever young American almost maddened him.

He could not realize that he had been beaten, and he was unwilling to acknowledge it.

He tried to start up, and made so fierce an effort that he rose to his hands and knees, with Jack hanging to him like a bulldog.

Matsuki tried to writhe round now and get another hold, his face at the same time working with smothered rage.

But Jack was still more than his equal.

He let him half turn; and then, with a quick movement, he threw him on his back on the mat, holding him with a knee on his chest and a hand on his throat.

The Japanese wrestler was again helpless.

Jack did not ask him this time to say he had enough.

The Jap's shoulders and back were touching the mat, and Jack knew no one could say this was not a fall, and a fair one; and he rose to his feet, letting the Jap get up at his leisure.

The Jap rose, panting and wildly excited.

But he saw the faces round him, and heard the wild acclaim with which Jack's feat had been greeted.

He saw that rage and declamations to the effect that he had not had a fair show would be worse than useless; and he tried to cool down.

Getting still better control of himself, and seeing it was the only thing he could do, he held out his hand to Jack.

"I"—his breast heaved and he panted as he spoke—"congratulation this very great young American wrestler!"

Jack accepted the extended hand with a smile.

His own lungs were laboring with the violence of his recent exertions. The Jap had not been an easy man to handle, simple as those wrestling tricks had seemed to those who merely looked on.

"I have met many wrestlers, old and young," said Matsuki, "but never one who was so great!"

Of course, this was largely buncombe and flattery. The Jap was trying to let himself down easily. Jack Lightfoot did not pretend to be the greatest wrestler, old or young, who had ever trod the mat. He was clever, but he did not consider himself a great, or a wonderful, wrestler.

The spectators were still shouting and laughing.

"You do me too much honor!" Jack panted. "I think there are other fellows in this room who could do those tricks."

Matsuki looked round the room.

His face twitched and his black eyes held almost a staring light. He had really not thoroughly recovered from that terrible knockout fall.

"If that is so," he said, trying to smile, "then my jiu-jitsu lessons would be of no use here. I cannot think it is so. You are the great wrestler; but"—he stopped and breathed hard—"I was taken by surprise by you, and my condition is not very good, since yesterday, when I have a fall which hurt me."

Bob Brewster laughed; and Jerry Mulligan yelled again, holding up his roll of money.

"I'm bettin' ivery cint I've got that Jack, the darlint, can do ut wanct more!"

"Oh, I guess that was enough," said Jack, turning away from the mat and shaking hands with some of the fellows who were pushing up to congratulate him. "I was simply trying to prove that the American methods are as good at least as the Jap."

"And better!" cried Skeen. "Howling mackerels, your methods, anyway, were simply out of sight!"

Only little Nat Kimball trembled and refused to be comforted.

His Japanese idol had been shattered before his very eyes.

But Nat was loyal.

He made his way over to Matsuki, while everyone was congratulating Jack, and took him by the hand.

"I'm with you still," he declared. "That was a good deal of an accident, I think; and if no one else will join your class you can count on me."

The worried look passed in some measure from Matsuki's dark face.

It is pleasant to have a sympathizer in a time of defeat and humiliation.

"Thank you—thank you, Mr. Nathaniel Kimball!" he said, beaming. "I am ever your very good friend; and I will gladly teach you the system that is the pride of Nippon. That was what you call the accident—those things which do not happen many time; and it do not make me believe that jiu-jitsu is not what I think."

Nat patted him on the shoulder and brushed off some dust which contact with the mat and the floor had placed there.

"I'm afraid this dust is full of germs," he said, solicitously, wiping his hands now with his handkerchief. "If you could only find a way to knock out the germs, it would be a mighty good thing—even a greater thing than the other. When you give me lessons we've got to have a new, clean mat and a clean floor. Just the thought of getting germs all over me would keep me from learning anything."

"My friend," said Matsuki, "I am your servant; whatever you wish for that you shall have."

"I wanted that class of fellows from here," said Nat, wistfully, "but I'm afraid I can't have that now. But I'll do some more talking, and maybe we can get a few fellows yet."

Nat had not only a spirit of loyalty, but he was hopeful; and that is a very good thing.

CHAPTER V.

A MYSTERY.

It was late before Jack separated from Lafe and Tom and some other friends, at the street corner, and started home.

There had been much to talk about; and after the wrestling bouts there had been a meeting of the athletic club, over which Jack presided.

Nat Kimball had remained for that meeting, but the Jap had gone away shortly after his defeat.

Jack was thinking of Matsuki and the victory achieved over him as he moved homeward, and was not paying particular attention to his steps.

For this reason he was not aware of the dark face that peered out at him from the alley he was passing, and had no thought of being assailed, until he was attacked by a man who sprang out at him, swinging a knife.

Jack heard the quick patter of feet, caught a half glimpse of this armed figure, and, whirling as if on springs, struck at it.

He aimed at his assailant's face, but struck low, and by a chance hit the knife hand.

Jack had thrown a good deal of power into that quickly delivered blow, and the knife fell with a clatter to the sidewalk, while a cry of pain came from the man's lips.

Instead of trying to repeat the attack he sprang away now, and darted up the street like a frightened deer.

Jack started after him; but stopped, when he saw how fast the rascal ran and how difficult it would be to overtake him.

"Matsuki!" was the name that was on his lips.

He stood listening to those sounds of rapidly running feet and heard them turn in the direction of the lake.

"He's afraid to go on uptown for fear some one may see him and recognize him; and so he goes toward the lake, where there are hardly any houses."

Jack was on the point of pursuing the man again, and seeing if he could not come upon him somewhere down by the lake.

But, thinking of the knife, he turned back to get that.

He found it by the glint of the starlight on its blade, and picked it up.

It was a straight, long, two-edged knife, that had evidently been carried in a sheath.

Jack scanned it curiously, as well as he could, tested its edge with his thumb, and felt a little quiver as

he thought how it would have been if that keen knife had been driven into his body.

He turned his face toward the lake again, while still examining the knife.

"If Matsuki did that it's a good thing I exposed his pretensions, and it will be a better thing if I have him arrested."

He walked slowly toward the street crossing, pondering this.

"I'll have to have that alley closed up, or else avoid it by walking in the street. It's not the first time I've been attacked there this summer."

He was thinking of the dark face of his assailant. He had seen it for just a moment, but it had looked so remarkably like Matsuki's that he was almost convinced the attacker this time was the Jap.

He had beheld the red rage in the eyes of Matsuki when he was defeated; and he had seen the same thing in the twist of the Jap's face as he had tried to be polite and to explain away his defeat.

Jack did not know very much about the Japanese, except from reading, but what little he knew was favorable. Though he had read much about them, Matsuki was the only Jap he had ever talked with.

Jack knew that Orientals are considered treacherous. He had always understood that the Japanese are not. Yet he had read that in some Japanese there is a considerable trace of Malay blood, and all the world knows that the Malays are notoriously treacherous and blood-thirsty.

"I shouldn't want to accuse him, unless I could prove it on him," thought Jack, as he walked along. "If I could only get to see him again!"

He stopped at the street corner, and then started on again, once more toward the lake.

As he did so a flare of fire sprang up in that direction, not far away.

"The gym!" he gasped.

Instead of running toward it he ran toward the nearest fire alarm box; for Cranford had a few, and a volunteer fire company that operated an old tub of a fire engine.

By the time Jack had sent in his alarm, he found that other people had seen the fire and were hurrying toward it.

Jack ran now straight down the street toward the gym, which was situated between his home and the lake.

He heard shouts, and cries of "Fire!" and the patter of feet.

Then the fire bell began to send out its wild clangor.

As Jack drew near to the gym, running at top speed, and seeing that the fire had attacked the rear stairway, he stumbled and fell headlong over a prostrate figure.

His hands touched this figure as he went down, and he knew it was the form of a man.

He bent over the form, in his excitement, and asked the man if he were hurt.

He did not know but that some drunken fellow had tumbled down there.

The answer was a groan.

Jack halted long enough to scratch a match, the light of which he flashed into the face of the man on the ground, and was amazed by what he saw.

"Matsuki!" he cried.

The man stirred, as the match flickered in his face.

Jack looked about for some one to whom he could make an appeal; but his rapid run had brought him first to the vicinity of the fire.

He knew that the flames were eating into the back stairway and that no time was to be lost if the fire was to be put out before it communicated to the building itself.

So he ran on.

Then, before he had gone a dozen yards, he stumbled over another prostrate form.

He stopped again and struck a match, the thing was so strange and mysterious.

As he did so he heard some of the citizens race past him toward the fire.

The fire bell was still tolling and the town was arousing.

Jack thrust the match down and stared into the face of this second prostrate figure.

"Jubal!" he gasped.

He dropped on his knees at Jubal's side.

"What is it, old fellow? What knocked *you* out?"

The words and the touch of Jack's hands seemed to recall Jubal to consciousness.

"Great hemlock!" he sputtered, starting up. "Where in time am I, anyhaow?"

"Right here. Close by the gym; and the gym's on fire."

That stirred Jubal even more than a dash of cold water could have done. The gym was his pride; and, as he was its janitor, it was practically in his charge. He staggered to his feet, with Jack assisting.

"By granny, so it is—on fire! Come on! We got to put that aout! How'd it happen?"

"That was what I was going to ask you?"

Jack was half-supporting him.

Jubal put up his hand, reeling, and seemed to brush

some sense into his head as he made that dabbing brush at his hair.

"Say," he said, whirling round upon Jack, "yeou don't reckon 'twas that gol-darned Jap that did it?"

Jack's heart leaped.

"What makes you say that?"

"Well, by hemlock, I think it must have been him that knocked me aout. I remember about that fire naow. I seen it a while ago. I was the last one tew leave the gym; and I'd jist locked her up, yeou know; and I was startin' fer home, when I seen that fire flash. I jumped raound toward that stairway, and then a feller that looked like that Jap rose up aout of the grass and hit me one. Oh, it was an awful clip!"

He put his hand to his head again.

"But we can't talk abaout that naow; we've got to put aout that fire."

"That's so," said Jack. "Can you walk?"

He released his hold of Jubal.

"Oh, I can walk, all right; yeou jist go ahead and put aout that fire. Great codfish, it will burn the gym daown purty soon!"

Jack leaped toward the stairway, leaving Jubal to make his way on as best he could, and he was soon fighting the fire desperately, joined by other people of the town, some of them members of the athletic club, who were shouting inquiries to each other even as they combated the flames.

The fire was still confined to the rear stairway, where it had been started; and its location told Jack that it was incendiary. A fire could not easily have started there of itself.

Jack now heard the old hand tub coming down the street, the men shouting as they pulled it along. More people were appearing from the direction of the town.

Jack's keen eyes and practical sense had already taken in the situation.

"Pull the stairs away!" he shouted. "Pull them down!"

He began the work himself, by getting a strong pole which he was able to use as a lever.

By prying and poking with this heavy pole at a point where the fire had eaten a hole and seemed about to eat into the building, Jack was able to get such a leverage that, with help from others, he tore down a large section of the stairway, that part of it which was burning the hottest.

Then the hand tub came up with a rush and a jangle, and the hose having been connected with a cistern in a yard not far away the work of pumping water on the remaining fire was begun by the panting firemen.

While Jack was still fighting the fire Jubal came up to him, taking hold to assist him.

"We've got it under control, I think," said Jack.

"By granny, 'twas a close call! But who was that feller clipped me on the head?"

"Who do you think it was?"

"Well, I don't want tew think it was him; but gol-darned if it didn't look tew me like that Jap. I didn't git tew see him as good as I might have. He riz right aout of the grass 'fore I knowed he was there, and I jist seen a glimpse of him, and the next instant I wasn't seein' anything, ner knowin' anything. Wa'n't I dazed a bit when yeou faound me?"

"Yes, pretty badly dazed."

"Well, my ole head ain't clear yit; feels as if a hive of bees had set up bizness inside it; but it's better, and I know what I'm talkin' abaout. And if that wa'n't the Jap that cracked my coco I'm a liar. What did he do it fur?"

"If it was him, doesn't it seem that he set fire to the gym, and then cracked your coco to keep you from putting the fire out, or because he thought you had seen him."

They were working with the lever as they talked, and all about them others were working, at tearing down the rear stairway and extinguishing the flames.

"As singular a thing as finding you here with your head broken, was that I found him right out there, ly-ing unconscious, just as you were!"

Jubal stopped with his mouth open.

"I want tew know!"

"That's right—he was right over there! I stum-bled against him, just as I did against you; and I flashed the light of a match in his face, just as I did a little later into yours. I didn't see him good, and didn't stop long, because I couldn't; but it was Matsuki. There's no one else round here could be mistaken for him."

"I want tew know!" Jubal gasped again.

He had stopped prodding and poking with the pole, for he could do nothing but stare at Jack.

"Yeou seen him, and I seen him, and he knocked me daown because he didn't want me tew put the fire aout or tew see him! Well, if that ain't enough tew make a feller swaller hissself with surprise I don't know what is! Jewrusalem!"

Jubal's amazement would have been amusing under other circumstances.

The hand tub began to shower water into the corner where Jubal and Jack and some others were working, and they had to retire.

"Say that over ag'in!" Jubal begged. "Seems tew me I can't believe it."

"There's another thing, Jubal—the Jap, or some one I thought was the Jap, attacked me as I went home; he jumped out from the alley and came at me with his knife."

Jack displayed the weapon.

Jubal's wonder was still open-mouthed.

"I want tew know!"

"Is there any reason why the Jap would attack me; or any reason why he would try to burn the gym, and then knock you down to keep you from discovering who he was, after he had set it on fire?"

"Gosh all hemlock, the only reason he'd do that, I reckon, would be because he was mad at yeou on account of what happened in the gym! I allaow yeou must have knocked him aout of gittin' a jiu-jitsu class from here. The fellers was all sayin' they wouldn't spend their good money on a thing like that, when they could learn the American methods by jist practicin' in the gym and sparrin' with each other. I guess that must have made the Jap hot. But if he set fire tew the gym and——"

"But here's what puzzles me worst of all now, Jubal."

"It does, eh. What is it?"

"The Jap himself. I found him lying over there. After he knocked you out, if he did, who knocked him out?"

Jubal scratched his head.

"Let's see if he's over there naow."

Together they walked to the place where Jack had come upon the prostrate figure.

The hand tub and the men who worked it were getting the fire well out, and there was now no danger that the gym would be destroyed, though the destruction of the rear stairway was something to be deplored.

When Jack and Jubal reached their destination no one was there.

"He's gone," said Jack. "Of course, I ought to have known he would be."

Jubal scratched his aching head again.

"My mind ain't jist as clear as it oughter be; my head aches like time and buzzes like a nest of hornets. Maybe that's the reason I can't make it aout. But if that Jap knocked me daown, who was it knocked the Jap daown? Maybe I was mistaken somehaow, and maybe it was the feller that knocked the Jap daown that started that fire."

"Perhaps. But the fellow who tackled me ran this

way, and then a little later the fire started. How does that fit into what you know?"

"There's tew many wheels wabbling raound in my head fer me tew git anything jist right," Jubal admitted. "Yeou make it aout fer me."

It was a thing Jack couldn't do.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MYSTERY DEEPENS.

When Jack went home, after the fire, he was met not only by his mother, but by his sister, Daisy.

Not much has been said in these stories about this splendid girl; but those who have read the stories from the beginning will remember that when Jack built his ice yacht and raced it against Ben Birkett's, he named it *Daisy*, in honor of his sister.*

Daisy Lightfoot was comely blonde, with silky brown hair, a clear complexion, dark blue eyes, and cheeks like wild rose petals. Her age was about that of Nellie Conner and Kate Strawn. In addition to her beauty, she was a sensible, practical girl, ambitious and energetic; just such a girl as one would expect to find in the sister of Jack Lightfoot.

Daisy had been absent in a distant city since the beginning of the year, where she had been studying music; for she had decided musical talent.

But now, both because it was vacation time and because of the recent straitened condition of Mrs. Lightfoot's finances, Daisy had come home, where it was probable, unless there was an upward turn in the family fortunes, she would remain indefinitely.

Yet she did not grieve because she had been forced to forego her musical studies.

She declared that she had made such good progress while away that she could advance herself a good deal now without further teaching, and since her return the piano in the little parlor had been kept busy.

When Daisy met her brother, Jack, her first words did not concern the fire at the gym, though that had interested as well as distressed her, but concerned a valuable present.

"Jack," she cried, "that diamond, you know—that diamond pin—it's gone!"

"Gone!" Jack gasped.

This diamond pin was not only valuable in itself, but more so to her because it had been presented to her just before she came home by the members of the music class with whom she studied.

*See No. I, "Jack Lightfoot's Challenge; or, The Winning of the Wager."

They had thought so highly of her that they had clubbed together, and the evening before her departure for home presented her with the diamond pin.

"Yes, it's gone—stolen!" said Daisy.

Her eyes were large and bright.

Her mother, who stood by her, was equally distressed.

"How do you know it was stolen?" said Jack, coming on into the house. "Perhaps you've mislaid it."

"It must have been stolen, Jack—and by that Jap!"

"By the Jap?"

The statement, coming after all the other things that had happened, was almost like a blow in the face, so startling was it.

"While you were at the club meeting," she explained, "he came here, to see you, I suppose. I didn't know he was in the house until I saw him sitting in your room."

"We don't know how he got in," said Mrs. Lightfoot.

"He was sitting there, in your room, in the dark," said Daisy. "The lamp wasn't lighted, and he was in a chair by the window, looking out toward the lake, or toward the gym. He frightened me, when I saw him; and I came down to report it to mother."

"You didn't speak to him?"

"No; and when we went back together, he was gone!"

"Gone?"

"Yes, gone!"

"Go on!" Jack begged.

"Well, that's all; except that when I went into my room and looked for my diamond pin, that was gone, too."

Her room was not far from Jack's, on the same floor, and it would have been easy for anyone invading Jack's room to have entered it from the hall."

"I don't know how he got into the house without any of us knowing it," said Mrs. Lightfoot, nervously. "The side door, through which he must have come, was closed and locked."

"Let's take another look round in your room," Jack suggested to his sister.

They went upstairs together, Mrs. Lightfoot following more slowly.

It was a pleasant thing to Jack to have his sister at home. She had been his good friend and playmate almost as long as he could remember. He was very fond of her, and thought highly of her musical abilities; and, though he liked to have her at home with

him, it grieved him that she had been compelled, even for a time, to give up her musical studies.

She put her hand on his shoulder as they mounted the stairs hurriedly together.

"You don't know how frightened I was, when I opened the door of your room, and saw that Jap sitting there by the window, when I thought we were all alone in the house."

"Then the door of my room was closed," said Jack. "I should think you would have been frightened!"

"Yes, I opened it. I thought you'd be home soon, and I was going in to see if your bed was in order for the night. You didn't get home at the time I looked for you, of course, for that fire broke out, and kept you down there."

"I was almost home when it broke out."

"Mother and I went out into the yard and watched it. I wanted to go down, but she didn't want me to. After that Jap was seen in here she was afraid to stay alone."

"Are you sure it was the Jap?"

They were in Jack's den, looking it over; after which they went into Daisy's room.

"Who else could it have been? What puzzles me is how he got into the house. He must have come up here to see you. Wasn't he at the gym meeting? I understood you to say he'd been there."

"He was there," said Jack, "but came away early. Do you feel sure it was the Jap you saw here?"

"Well, I can't be absolutely sure, of course; for I only saw him for just an instant, and then I ran down the stairs; and the light wasn't good, for the room was dark. But I saw him, you know, when he came down to the shed room this afternoon with Nat Kimball to see you. I naturally supposed he had come to see you again. But, why didn't he knock—why did he sneak into the house that way? And mother says he couldn't have got in without unlocking that side door."

"Unless he climbed into the window of my room over that trellis."

"Oh, he wouldn't have done that!"

They were in Daisy's room, and she was making another frantic search for the missing diamond pin, talking while she searched.

Jack was helping her, thinking it still possible she had misplaced the pin.

"Mrs. Lightfoot came into the room while they were rummaging about."

"Oh, it's gone, and I know it!"

The tears were in Daisy's eyes.

Jack dropped into a chair.

"Have you looked in every place you could have put it?" Mrs. Lightfoot asked, anxiously.

"In every single place, and it's gone!"

"That's just one more puzzle to-night," said Jack; "and now I'll tell you about the others."

Then he told of the attack made on him by the dark-faced man who leaped out from the alley; of how he had seen the fire flash up; and of the prostrate forms he had stumbled over as he ran to the gym. He told, too, of what had taken place in the gym before the Jap left it.

It was a long story, but he cut it as short as possible.

"Well, I think he ought to be arrested!" was Daisy's angry exclamation.

"If it was the Jap you saw in my room—and it must have been——"

"It couldn't have been anyone else, said Daisy, positively..

"I guess you're right, Daisy; it looks so."

"Why, who else could it have been?"

"Oh, it was the Jap, of course. I was thinking of Nick Flint, but you couldn't mistake Nick Flint for that Jap."

"It wasn't Nick; I know him too well."

"He came into my room to attack me, I should say," said Jack. "He was made furious by what happened at the gym, and he slipped up here to lay for me. Then, when you discovered him, that frightened him and he got out of the house. You didn't see him leave, so he must have climbed down from the window by the trellis. Likely he got into my room by the trellis."

"Jack, you must keep that window locked when you're away!" Mrs. Lightfoot exclaimed, nervously.

"Not finding me here, and being scared away when he was seen, he laid for me in the alley," Jack went on.

"And then, when you knocked the knife out of his hand he ran down to the gym in his rage and set it on fire," said Daisy.

Jack had exhibited the knife while telling his story.

"Yes," Jack admitted, "that was what he did."

He looked at his mother.

"Will you be afraid to stay here with Daisy while I go up town again? I know it's getting late, but——"

"What do you intend to do?"

"Well, don't you think he ought to be arrested? Daisy could testify that she saw him here in the room; and I know what I saw, and there's Jubal. We could make a pretty strong case against him, I think. And maybe if I hurry about it the diamond pin can be recovered."

Mrs. Lightfoot hesitated.

She rather feared the vengeance of the Jap, and she was more willing to lose the diamond pin forever than to have Jack get into trouble.

"I think I'd better go up and tell Kennedy about it, anyway."

"But Daisy doesn't positively know that it was the Jap!"

"But who else could it have been?" Daisy persisted.

"And what could Kennedy do?" asked Mrs. Lightfoot. "Daisy isn't sure, and you aren't sure."

"I am sure enough that it was the fellow who came with Nat Kimball down here this afternoon," Daisy asserted.

"I'll go and have a talk with Kennedy about it, and see what he advises."

Jack won his mother's consent to this; and then left the house again and hurried uptown.

CHAPTER VII.

MAC K REMINGTON'S SUSPICIONS.

In looking about for Kennedy, Jack went to the railroad station, where he found Macklin Remington seated at the telegrapher's desk and scribbling furiously.

Mack looked up as Jack came in, and lifted his pencil from the pad of paper on which he was writing.

"Oh, I've got a great story to-night!" he cried, his apple-red cheeks glowing. "I'll get a column out of this in the *Cardiff Standard*, and two or three sticks in my New York paper."

Mack spoke as if he owned that New York paper.

Remington, in addition to his studies in telegraphy, was ambitious to become a newspaper man; and he had become the Cranford correspondent of the *Cardiff Standard*, and also had secured the position of correspondent from Cranford for a New York daily. He had a column or two of Cranford news in the *Standard* once or twice a week, sent it full write-ups of all the ball games played in the Four-Town League, and other matters of interest; and now and then, when something phenomenal happened, he had a stickful or two of matter in the New York paper.

"What's your story about?" said Jack.

Mack handed him the sheets on which he had been writing.

Jack flushed as he read the first paragraph.

It concerned his meeting with the Jap in the gym that night, and was eulogistically flattering to himself.

The other concerned the fire at the gym, with mys-

terious hints that it was of incendiary origin, and the incendiary was suspected.

"Who do you suspect?" Jack asked.

Mack winked at him.

"Well, now, I could make that thing mighty sensational, if I wasn't afraid to! I don't want to get the Cardiff paper caught in a slander suit. It would be a sensation, wouldn't it, if I said that it was suspected that the Jap set that fire?"

"It would be—very sensational! You'd better not say it, unless you know what you're talking about. Who suspects him?"

Mack thumped his breast and puffed out his red cheeks.

"I do. And I'm somebody, ain't I?"

Jack looked at him earnestly, as he handed back the written sheets.

"Have you had a talk with Jubal?"

"No; haven't had a talk with anybody."

"Then I'd leave that out. If anything turns up later you can send it in."

"The trouble is," objected Mack, wistfully, "that I've got to file this stuff so early. Do you know anything? Don't it look to you as if the Jap started that fire?"

Jack hesitated.

"I don't think I know anything positively. I've thought as you did, that it may have been the Jap."

He was about to leave the room; then turned round.

"Leave that a minute, and we'll go up to the hotel where the Jap is stopping. Maybe we'll jump something there."

Mack climbed out of his chair by the desk with great alacrity and jammed his cap down on his head.

"Gee! if that could be nailed down on him it would make a sensation and loom up in that daily tomorrow!"

Mack had the instinct of the newspaper man already pretty well developed. The whole thing to him was merely material for "copy."

When they visited the hotel they were given a surprise.

The Jap had gone!

He had paid his bill a few minutes before, and had taken the train for Cardiff at the station, right while Mack was inside working at his "story."

Mack's apple-red cheeks burned again.

"Say," he said, "doesn't that prove it?"

"It doesn't just prove it; but it looks mighty suspicious."

"Pap says that whenever a fellow has done wrong he's going to run even before the officers get wind of it and start after him. Would you put that in the paper—what we suspect? He's gone to Cardiff; that would put the officers there wise, and it would make a sensation when the paper comes out in the morning. He's trying to start a class there, you know. It would knock his class winding, and cause his arrest."

"And get you and your paper into no end of trouble, if you happen to be wrong."

They turned back toward the station.

"That's just the trouble with newspaper work," said Mack, sagely, hooking his hand through Jack's arm. "You've got to guess at things so confounded much, or else the other fellows will get ahead of you. And if you guess wrong, why you're in a hole. If you don't send it in, the paper calls you down; and if you do send it in you've got a slander suit against you before you know it."

He talked as if he had been a newspaper correspondent for years.

"Pap says the business is too worrying for him; he'd rather be a telegrapher, and not be responsible for the things he sends. But there's more fun in being a newspaper man, and more excitement."

Reaching the station Mack now asked those he saw there—all of them his close friends—if they had seen the Jap take the train for Cardiff.

One of the men, the baggageman, laughed.

"I saw him swing on, and I knew he'd made a failure here, and wasn't coming back any more, just from the disgusted look in his face."

There was no more to be learned at the station, and Jack went in search of Kennedy.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME FURTHER LIVELY TIMES.

The fire at the gym and Jack's encounter on the mat with Matsuki were the talk of the town.

Jack did not find Kennedy that night; and caution, together with the fear that he might be wrong, kept him from saying anything about his suspicions until the next morning.

But Jack and Mack Remington were not the only ones who had connected Jack's success in the gym with the fire that had followed; and these people did not hesitate to repeat their thoughts. So that, long before morning, the suspicion was all over Cranford.

Nat Kimball heard it, of course, and Nat was furious.

"Just because he's a foreigner, and a Jap, and hasn't any friends here," said Nat, "they make up that about him!"

He came down to see Jack Lightfoot.

"It's an outrage!" he shouted. "Why don't you go round and tell people that it can't be so?"

Before Jack could answer, Jubal made his appearance, coming to Jack's home to see if he had learned anything more.

He heard Nat repeat his heated words.

"Well, by granny, naow, I'm one that's thinkin' that he done it! Everything p'int to it."

"What points to it?" demanded Nat. "Nothing points to it but your foolish suspicions! He's an honorable little gentleman. You don't like him—that's all!"

But when Nat had heard Jubal's story, supplemented by Jack's, he was himself puzzled.

Yet he would not give in.

"Of course I can't blame you, now that I understand; but you're wrong—you're dead wrong! That Jap is as straight as I am. Somebody else did that."

"Well, who?" said Jubal. "Who can yeou p'int yer finger at? There ain't a gol-darned person in this taown looks like that feller. If there is, name him. Yeou saw him purty good, didn't you, Jack?"

"I'm sorry to say I didn't."

"Well, I did—good enough fer me tew know who 'twas. And 'twas him."

Nat was troubled. The only other young fellow, aside from himself, who had a dark face and coal-black hair, in Cranford, and whose size was anywhere near right, was Nick Flint. But he disliked to mention Flint, for he knew the chances were that he was mistaken. Flint was mean enough to do a thing of that kind, if he had reason for wanting to do it; but Flint lacked that sufficient reason, and Nat did not think he had the nerve.

"You can know a thing," he argued, "and still not be able to prove it."

"That's jist it," said Jubal; "naow yeou're hitting it! I know it, even if I can't prove it."

"You didn't let me finish. I was going to say that I am as sure that the Jap didn't do that—couldn't do it—though I can't prove it, as I am that we're standing here. I've been with him almost every minute while he was here, except while I stayed last night at the club meeting. I went up to his hotel shortly after the fire was out, and found him sitting there. He wasn't flustered in any way; and he would have been, if what you've said is true. He seemed glad to see me, and thanked me for what I'd done for him here. He said he was going back to Cardiff, and that he was sorry that his effort to get up a class from here seemed to be a failure."

"Well, that don't prove nothin'!"

"The quiet way in which he talked with me there at the hotel, and the honest look of his face and eyes, makes me know he wasn't the man."

"He did look honest," Jack admitted.

"He's strictly honest, I tell you! And this story that's going round about him is a shame."

"If yeou're so shore of that jist yeou name some one else who could have done it," demanded Jubal, combatively.

"I can't, of course; the whole thing's strange; but that's no sign he did it."

The talk fermented in the town throughout the day, but resulted in nothing. It was merely talk. There was proof enough to cause the arrest of the Jap on suspicion; but that proof, being rather wavering and un-

certain, would probably have fallen down under the severe batterings of a cross-examination.

For that reason, Kennedy, the constable, when he returned to town—he had been away overnight—suggested that more proof had better be collected before a warrant was sworn out for the Jap's arrest.

This was the condition of affairs when Jack Lightfoot took his way to the gym—night having come again, and another open meeting being in order for the transaction of certain business connected with some baseball games and an athletic field meet that was soon to be pulled off, for which the boys of Cranford were getting ready.

Jack was a little late this evening.

As he passed up the inner stairway from the first floor to the upper where the gym was located, he was astounded to hear the voice of Matsuki raised in angry controversy with Phil Kirtland.

Jack cleared the remaining stairs two at a time, and reached the top.

The gym was filled with young fellows.

Near the center were Kirtland and Matsuki, facing each other in angry attitudes.

Jack heard just enough to know that Kirtland had brought up the subject of the stealing of Daisy Lightfoot's gift diamond pin, that he had boldly accused Matsuki of it, and that a war of words had followed.

Kirtland, though he did not always like Jack, was rather fond of Jack's sister; and he had called on her at her home that day, to have a talk with her about her experiences while away, and to enjoy the pleasure of her company.

During that talk Daisy had told him of the loss of her valuable present, and had stated the grounds of her suspicions against the Jap.

Nevertheless, it was an astounding thing to find Kirtland and Matsuki warring over it there in the gym, when Jack had supposed that Matsuki was in Cardiff.

Nat Kimball came tumbling up the stairs at Jack's heels.

Before Jack could speak to him, or do anything, Matsuki had attacked Kirtland.

Leaping in with a jiu-jitsu spring, he caught Kirtland by the lapels of his coat, at the same time putting his right foot up against Kirtland's left leg just above the knee; and then, with a quick jerk, he threw Kirtland over his head.

Phil fell sprawling.

Before he could rise the Japanese had whirled like a cat and was on him again, gripping him by the shoulder and the back of the neck and driving his face against the floor.

Jack went across the intervening space with lightning leaps.

Everybody crowded toward the combatants, but Jack was there first.

Catching Matsuki by one hand, Jack gave an upward, wrenching movement, that bent the arm backward on the body; and by means of the leverage thus gained and the pain produced he literally tore the infuriated Jap from the young fellow he had so suddenly assailed.

The Jap rolled over the floor like a cart wheel, and leaped to his feet with a springy movement.

A dozen fellows rushed at him, as he backed into a corner.

"Here!" said Tom, pushing into their midst. "A dozen on one isn't a fair deal!"

Jack was helping Kirtland up from the floor.

"Let me get at him!" shouted Phil, wild with anger. His mouth was bleeding.

"All right," said Jack, "if you want to; but you're in no condition. You've got to cool down."

Little Nat Kimball pushed through the crowd and stood beside the panting Jap.

"Fellows," he appealed, "give us a square deal! What's the trouble, anyway?"

A number began to tell him, some of them still surging toward the Jap, who had backed into his corner and was standing on the defensive.

"It is them!" cried Matsuki, his voice quivering. "I come here. I am a peaceable man. I am accused of theft. I am no thief. I do not know what he means when he say 'thief.'"

"Let up, fellows," begged Nat, to the belligerent

youths who pressed toward him. "If anybody's been calling Matsuki a thief, I know he's mistaken. He may think he knows, but I'm sure he don't. Have a little reason and common sense, fellows."

Nat was actually heroic, standing there pleading for the threatened Jap.

"Let me understand this thing," said Nat. "Who said he was a thief?"

"Kirtland."

"What does he know? How does he know it?"

Kirtland came forward again, wiping the blood from his mouth with his handkerchief.

He faced Matsuki. Kirtland was hot-headed, and intemperate of language when angry, or he might not have said to Matsuki the things he had already said and which he gave utterance to now.

"The fellow that goes into the air when he's accused is the fellow who's guilty!" he shouted, bellowing the words at Matsuki.

Matsuki gave him a tigerish look.

"Here, you!" he shouted, shaking his brown finger at Phil. "I'm not afraid of you—understand that! I am no thief! Would I come here to this gym if I am a thief? I come to your town again a while ago, on the train from Cardiff. I hear some one say that you have a meeting to-night at the gym. So I come down. I think maybe after you think some more that you may join my class of jiu-jitsu. That is why I come. And then you say thief, and you make the trouble with me. I am no thief!"

His face was ferocious, and apparently if he had felt free to leap again on Phil Kirtland he would have done him serious injury.

"I will fight you!" he shouted, his rage increasing. "Whoever say that I am thief, I will fight him! I am no thief!"

Jack Lightfoot held Phil back with a restraining hand.

"Fellows," he said, persuasively, "this is no way to do—no way to go about a thing of this kind. No matter what you may think, every man requires some courtesy and consideration, and everyone is held to be innocent until he's been proven to be guilty."

Jack's grip tightened as Kirtland tried to move toward the Jap.

"Let go!" Kirtland snarled. "I'm able to look out for myself!"

Jack stepped in front of him, nearer to the Jap, and some of the young fellows fell back.

"Matsuki," he said, "I have nothing personally against you, so long as I do not know positively that you're the fellow that the talk is all about. I think I have as much call to be against you as anyone, as it was my sister's diamond pin which is missing, and there are several things which I want to call on you to explain."

"What is it?" shouted Matsuki, angrily, failing to respond to Jack's friendly attitude.

Jack faced him.

"When you left the gym here last night where did you go?"

"I went to my hotel!" snapped Matsuki. "Is it for you to ask me? Why you ask me? Am I not free man?"

"You didn't come back to the gym?"

"No!" was the furious answer. "I was the fool to-night, for coming back to it."

"When you left your hotel, where did you go?"

"I went to the station for the train to Cardiff. I stay in Cardiff until this evening, when I come back here. I have been no place else."

"You knew about the fire at the gym?"

"I hear the bell and I see fire down this way, and I hear the people say something, but I did not leave the hotel."

Jack looked him straight in the face.

"Will you say, Matsuki, that I did not find you lying right out there on the grass, near this building, shortly after that fire started; that I did not stumble on you there, while you seemed to be half unconscious, and did not flash a match and hold it before your face?"

Matsuki's eyes seemed to become bloodshot, so wildly did they gleam.

"It is the lie—the black lie!" he screamed.

And as he screamed that denial he shot himself at Jack Lightfoot.

But he was not meeting Phil Kirtland this time.

Jack saw the fire of rage flame in the dark face of the Jap and knew from that he meant to spring on him, and so was not unprepared when Matsuki made that tiger jump.

Jack's hard right fist shot out; and, landing on Matsuki's jaw, it lifted him in the air, and hurled him with a thump against the side of the gym.

But Matsuki's jaw and head and whole body were like iron.

He leaped up as soon as his feet touched the floor, and came again at Jack, wild with rage.

Jack let drive at him again, with even a heavier blow, for this thing angered him; but Matsuki seemed to slide right under that blow, and the next moment his arms were round Jack's body, with the crushing grip of a python.

Together they swayed for a moment, while the gym was in a state of furious excitement; and Matsuki tried to get lower down, in order to lift Jack for a throw.

As he thus slipped down, Jack succeeded, by a tremendous effort, in breaking the Jap's arm hold, for the Jap had to relax his arms in his effort to get a hold lower down.

The next instant Jack had shot his arms under those of the Jap.

Matsuki had lowered his head; and Jack now, with a great jerk, drew the Jap to him, forcing his head thus further down; and now he had secured that terrible hold which professionals call an octus, whereby an opponent is actually jounced up and down with his own weight on his own neck, head down, feet off the floor, and as helpless as a fly in a web.

Jack jammed Matsuki thus against the side of the building, and then dropped him in a heap on the floor.

Matsuki fell with a gasp, almost sure that his neck had been broken, and lay there gasping and glaring at Jack.

Jack was panting, and his face was red, while the sweat stood out on his face.

It was no child's work to handle Matsuki; and though Jack had conquered him for the time, doing it quickly and with such apparent ease, it had really been at the expenditure of his entire strength.

"Matsuki," he said, harshly, as his lungs thus

labored and he faced the Jap, "you can't jump at me that way and expect me to take it easy. If you try that again you'll get worse next time. Understand that!"

Some of the boys were whooping in their admiration, but Jack was giving them no heed.

"I am call thief!" said Matsuki, while his eyes flamed.

"Yes, you were; and it's unfortunate, perhaps, until some proof has been given. I may have been too hasty myself, and I'm sorry if I was."

"Oh, cut it out!" Lafe grumbled. "He didn't get the half that was coming to him."

Matsuki was trembling violently, shaken with the rage and the humiliation of defeat.

"I will not stay where I am insult so!" he shouted.

And, leaping through the crowd, which gave way before him, for most of the fellows there were afraid of him, he sped down the stairway, and out of the building into the darkness.

"Follow him, and have him arrested," shouted Phil, starting after him.

"That's right," cried Lafe; "have him pulled! He deserves it, whether he stole anything or not."

Jack still hesitated.

But others flung themselves down the stairs and hurried into the town with the full intention of having Matsuki arrested and jailed on the several charges that could be brought against him.

But he had not gone straight to his hotel; and so they failed to find him; even though they found Kennedy, who had also, by this time, come to the conclusion that the arrest of the Jap would be the proper thing.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BATTLE IN JACK'S ROOM.

As may be imagined, there was plenty of talk in the gym after the flight of Matsuki and the departure of his pursuers.

Little Nat Kimball still stood up for the Jap like a hero, denouncing Phil Kirtland and speaking some very sharp words to Jack, and declaring roundly that

the whole thing was a shame and a disgrace to the town of Cranford.

Lafe Lampton was made so "red-headed" by some of the things Nat said that he threatened in his lazy way to slap Nat's face.

"Try it!" yelled Nat. "Just try it on once! You're bigger than I am, but just try that if you want to!"

Lafe did not try it. Nat's belligerent manner cooled him down, and he began to laugh.

"Have a peanut!" he said, instead.

Nat knocked it angrily to the floor, as Lafe pushed it out to him.

"Do you suppose that I'd eat anything that's been in your pockets, you germ-covered apple hog? I'd be afraid it would kill me. I can buy my own peanuts, if I want any."

Tom Lightfoot laughingly tried to pat Nat on the shoulder, but Nat flounced away from him.

"Don't touch me!" he shouted. "I'm ashamed of you fellows—of every one of you, Jack included! That Jap came here without friends——"

"And started in to stealing!" said Skeen.

"He didn't! I don't believe it! What's the proof? It's rotten—your proof is simply rotten!"

"Oh, go cool down!" Bob Brewster grunted.

"Go cool down yourself!"

"I'm not saying anything."

"Of course you aren't; when you open your big mouth a lot of wind comes out, and that's all."

"Nat," said Brodie, "you're emitting so much gas that if you don't cork yourself up pretty soon you'll explode."

Thus it went, until Nat was so enraged that he wanted to fight everyone who spoke to him.

Jack did not stay a great while at the gym.

The meeting, which was to have considered the subject of the athletic events soon to come off and the ball games scheduled for early play, adjourned without having been formally called to order.

Jack went uptown, where he learned that Matsuki had not yet put in an appearance at his hotel nor at the railway station.

After a time Jack started home, walking with Tom and Lafe Lampton.

"We'll go with you beyond that alley to-night," said Tom. "If that was the Jap who attacked you he may be laying for you there again; he must be in the town somewhere."

"Looks mighty suspicious against him, that he didn't go back to his hotel," said Lafe.

"Well, he may have felt sure that he'd be arrested for what he did to-night in the gym, and so was afraid to go to the hotel," Jack suggested.

"He lied to you, of course," said Tom, "when he said he was not down by the gym when the fire started, and that you didn't see him there."

No one was in the alley; but they went on to the gate, where they stood talking for a time, before Jack went into the yard.

From the inside of the gate Jack watched them as they swung back up the street.

Then he went on along the path, unlocked the side door, and let himself in; and, taking a lamp which he found there, he began to mount toward his room.

He had been given a good deal to think about during the past twenty-four hours, and much of it was of a puzzling character.

Mrs. Lightfoot and Daisy were out somewhere, making a little evening call, Jack discovered. They would have met him at the door, he knew, if they had been at home; and the lamp burning in the sitting room told him they had not retired.

Jack had not locked the side door after him, and as he thus neared the top of the stairway the door opened and a lithe form came running up the stairs after him, with footsteps so soft that they made hardly a sound.

It was the Jap.

Jack, not knowing but that the Jap meant to assault him, moved on to the head of the stairs, where he stopped.

He discovered, at this instant, that the door of his room was open, and the window also, for a puff of wind coming through the door from the window extinguished his lamp.

He knew the Jap was at his side, and spoke to him.

Then something dark rushed from Jack's room.

Jack reeled against the wall, letting the lamp fall to the floor, where it was shattered.

The next moment he was aware that a terrific combat was taking place there in the hall.

Two men seemed in the dim light to be locked together in a deadly embrace.

They staggered to and fro; and, thus struggling together, reeled, fighting, into Jack's room, where the struggle continued.

Jack was wildly astonished.

But he followed the combatants; and then by the light from the window falling into the room he apparently saw the Jap fighting with himself.

This could not be true, of course; but the man with whom the lithe Jap was locked in a deadly embrace was his exact counterpart, so far as Jack could see. Seemingly, another Jap was attacking Matsuki.

Jack stood in the doorway, gasping and staring, and was about to leap in for the purpose of separating these desperate fighters, when the moon, which had been under a cloud, plunged out from behind it and threw a flood of light into the room.

Jack now fairly reeled, so great was his amazement.

He saw the men clearly as they writhed and twisted, trying each to get the better of the other.

One of them was Matsuki, who had followed Jack through the lower doorway, for the purpose of speaking with him, apparently.

The other was Boralmo!

To Jack the name of Boralmo was almost a name of fear and dread. He was the mysterious Hindoo who had come to Cranford with Reel Snodgrass; the man of mystery; the man of hypnotic power and cunning legerdemain; the man with whom Jack had already more than once come into conflict.

Jack saw through the whole mystery of the recent situation at a glance now.

He saw, as those two fighters swayed and strained, that Boralmo was made up to resemble Matsuki. His beard was gone, and the change otherwise was so great that only one thing had enabled Jack to detect his identity.

Boralmo had a fiery eye, that seemed ever to gleam with something red behind it. Now, in his rage, that red was so pronounced that Jack could almost fancy it illuminated the room.

So great was Jack's astonishment that he uttered the name loudly:

"Boralmo!"

Then for the first time the desperate adventurer—who was really not a Hindoo at all, as those who have followed these stories know—saw Jack, and knew that he had made a great mistake in attacking the Jap.

He had climbed to Jack's room, over the trellis, through the window.

He had lain there for Jack, waiting like one of his own hooded cobras for Jack to appear, when he meant to strike him a deadly blow.

He had heard Jack enter the house and that had misled him.

He had seen the light go out; and then he had leaped forth to attack Jack.

In the darkness he had assailed Matsuki.

He had struck at Matsuki with a knife, but the Jap had grasped his hand, and thus saved himself from a severe wound.

And then they had locked together, and the fight that followed was something terrible to witness.

When Boralmo thus became aware of the mistake he had made, he flung Matsuki from him.

He had been choking the Jap and had rendered him almost senseless, though Matsuki was still hanging on like a bulldog.

Matsuki reeled against the wall, and then fell in a heap.

"I have you now!" Jack yelled, giving a leap straight at Boralmo.

The latter's strength was already well spent, for the Jap had fought like a tiger.

Seeing this strong, lithe youth rushing upon him, and bewildered by the discovery of his mistake, Boralmo turned to jump from the open window.

Jack's hand shot out to detain him.

It caught in a pocket of his coat.

There was a ripping sound as the stout goods tore away and a clatter of something on the floor; then Boralmo shot outward and downward through the window.

Jack ran to the window, and for an instant it seemed that he was about to take that wild leap, too.

But when he looked out he could not see Boralmo.

The treacherous moon had again dived under some thick clouds, and the yard was in heavy shadow.

Nor could Jack hear a thing, though he listened closely.

He hesitated, wondering if he should take the leap, and then turned back, resolved to run downstairs.

Matsuki lay gasping on the floor by the wall, in the now half darkness.

Jack leaped for the stairs, and in the hall trod with crunching weight on the fragments of the broken lamp.

He went downstairs with great bounds, and flung himself out into the yard.

But Boralmo had been given time to make good his escape.

CHAPTER X.

HOW IT HAD HAPPENED.

Jack had a sense of bewilderment, as he hurried back into the house.

Finding another lamp in the lower hall, he lighted it and hastened up to his room.

Matsuki was sitting up on the floor, staring about as if dazed.

"Ah, you see that man?" he cried, excitedly, as Jack came into the room with the lamp.

"Yes," Jack answered.

He knew that he was as shaken by excitement as Matsuki was himself.

Matsuki staggered to his feet; and then, feeling too weak to walk, dropped heavily into a chair.

"He assault me—he attack me! At first I thought it was you!"

"Why should I attack you?"

"Oh, I do not know—so many queer things happen since I come to your town! I come up here to speak with you; to tell you that I am not thief—I never was thief. I not go to the hotel yet; for maybe if I go I shall be arrested, and so I come here, after that I see you come home, for to speak with you and assure you that I——"

He stopped, gurgling.

"Matsuki," said Jack, "can you walk downstairs?"

I think I understand this thing, and I beg your pardon. That man must not be permitted to leave the town."

Matsuki staggered to an erect position. He was so weak from the choking he had received and from the terrific exertion he had been through that he could hardly stand; yet he bravely declared that he was all right; and he and Jack went downstairs together.

Out in the yard they encountered Mrs. Lightfoot and Daisy, who were just then returning home.

They were surprised when they saw that Jack was with Matsuki.

"Haven't time to explain now, mother," said Jack. "Matsuki and I have got to hurry uptown. You'll find a broken lamp in the upper hall. I let it drop and broke it."

He hurried on; and at the gate, still finding Matsuki weak, Jack took him by the arm and assisted him along.

"That man was not Jap," said Matsuki. "He look like Jap, but he was not Jap."

"No, he wasn't a Jap. He has been here before and claimed to be a Hindoo, but I've good grounds for believing he's an Englishman, or an American."

"Oh, him you know?"

"I've met him!"

There was a world of meaning in that which the Jap could not catch, for he was not familiar with recent happenings in Cranford.

"If I go uptown there will be trouble made for me; they call me thief, and they maybe will arrest me."

He hung back.

"I'll see that they don't; and I'll tell them that you're not what they thought—that you're all right."

Jack understood the situation fully, so far as it was then to be grasped in detail.

He knew now that Boralmo had returned surreptitiously to Cranford. Boralmo held a murderous grudge against him; and it was Boralmo who had attacked him from the alley, Boralmo who had tried to burn the gym, and Boralmo who had crept that night into his room and had lain for him there, by chance attacking the Jap instead.

"There's one thing that puzzles me, Matsuki," said Jack, as they went uptown. "You said you were not down by the gym when the fire started last night."

"I was not; I was at my hotel."

"I believe you now. When you told me that before I could not believe it, for I thought I had seen you."

"You saw that man," said Matsuki, excitedly.

"It must have been him; it could have been no one else. But he so resembled you that I thought it must be you."

"He has painted the face," said Matsuki.

"Yes, painted his face and made up to look like you; and a mighty good imitation he made of it. He is a dangerous man."

"He is one devil."

"Yes, he is that, too."

"Why he do that; why he jump at me and fight with me?"

"He thought he was attacking me."

Jack was pondering the mystery still, and wondering what had knocked Boralmo senseless down at the gym; and also wondering if the clever rascal had really been senseless, or whether he had just been lying there slyly when Jack tripped over him and had then "played possum," pretending to be unconscious when Jack flashed the match in his face. It was hard to tell.

As Jack and Matsuki thus hastened uptown they saw Reel Snodgrass.

Reel had been very quiet for the last few days. He had kept out of Jack's way, and Jack had not thought much about him; but the knowledge that Boralmo was again in Cranford had brought Reel back into Jack's mind.

He was about to approach Reel and demand what he knew of Boralmo, when Reel took a side street and hastened away.

Jack could not know the fear that for two or three days had been tugging at the heart of Reel Snodgrass.

In getting the Hindoo to help him, he had placed himself in the power of that rascal.

Boralmo had returned to Cranford disguised and intoxicated.

But for his intoxication he would not have come back so soon, and he would not have remained and threatened the life of Jack Lightfoot, even though a great hate of Jack had grown up in his heart.

He had continued in hiding, and continued his drinking, dropping in at night on Reel, to the latter's dismay, and talking drunkenly of the things he proposed to do to Jack. Reel did not dare to warn Jack; perhaps had no desire to, for he hated Jack himself. Yet he was mortally afraid that Boralmo would do something to bring about his arrest and thus expose himself, and so expose Reel and his pretensions.

Jack found Kennedy, the constable, on the next corner, and told him of his discoveries; and Kennedy, calling several men to act with him, began a search through the town for Boralmo.

Of course, the clever rascal was not to be found.

Though intoxicated, he was not so drunk as not to know that he had exposed himself, and that his safety now lay in getting out of Cranford at once.

For that reason, even Reel did not see him again, and Kennedy had his search in vain.

Jack went with Matsuki on up to the hotel, and there he found Nat Kimball, who had some young fellows grouped around him and was wrangling with them in regard to Matsuki, Nat defending the Jap.

They stared when they saw the Jap with Jack.

Jack could afford to be open, and honest, and honorable; no one can ever afford to be anything else.

He conducted Matsuki up to this group.

"Fellows," he said, "I and all of us, with the exception of Nat, have done Matsuki a great wrong. I have asked his pardon; and ask it again, here and now."

Then he explained just what is known to the reader.

Nat clasped Matsuki's hand, his face filled with delight.

"I knew it!" he yelled. "I knew it from the start!"

"I didn't," Jack acknowledged. "I'm sorry that I didn't, but I didn't. And anything that I can do to make it right I'm willing to do."

"Join his jiu-jitsu class," Nat suggested.

Jack smiled.

"I don't think I can do that; but I'll not say anything to keep anyone else from joining who wants to, and I'll not put anything in his way."

"Where is this Hindoo?" one of the fellows asked. "Why not search for him."

"I intend to help," said Jack. "Matsuki was not feeling the best in the world after that tussle with him, and I came up here with him; but now I'm going to help Kennedy in that search."

He relinquished the Jap to Nat Kimball, and went away, leaving Nat fairly dancing with joy.

* * * * *

"Say," called Mack Remington, running up to Jack an hour later, "is that so, what I've heard?"

"I can't say, as I don't know what you've heard."

"About Boralmö."

"Yes."

Mack pulled pad and pencil from his pocket and struck the attitude of an interviewer.

"Tell me all about it—everything."

"You're going to send this to the Cardiff *Guardian*?"

"Yes; and a few lines to my New York daily."

"Well, you can't possibly make it out that I've played the hero this time," said Jack, smiling. "I've made the biggest fool mistake of my life, and been about as unheroic as any fellow that ever walked."

"Well, not that; what I want is the particulars of that fight down at your house, you know. I'll work it in with what has been already told—the fire and the other things, you see. The whole thing is good for another column in the *Guardian*, and a good lively paragraph in my New York paper. A fellow can repeat himself somewhat, in a thing like this, you know."

"What about Reel? You aren't going to expose him?"

Nat lowered pencil and paper.

"Gee! I'd like to! Say, shall I?"

"Why, if you want him to lick you to-morrow, go ahead; it's nothing to me. He needs to be shown up, if ever a fellow did."

"I guess I won't," said Mack, cautiously. "Pap says the fellow who runs into a fight when he could just as easily run the other way is a good deal of a fool, and I guess he's right. I'll not say anything about Reel this time; but I'll work this other business for all it's worth."

He fell to scribbling desperately, asking a string of questions.

When Jack got home, at a rather late hour, he was met by his sister, Daisy.

"Jack—Jack!" she cried, holding something toward him in her hand. "Here is that diamond pin!"

"So it is!" he said, staring. "Then it wasn't stolen at all!"

"I don't know what to think about it. I found it in your room, with a piece of torn cloth, like a pocket from a coat, lying near it."

"Oh! I think I can explain that. It was stolen, then, and by Boralmö. He attacked the Jap in that room, jumping upon him in the hall there; which caused me to let the lamp fall and break. I sprang at him as he tried to get out of the window, and setting my hand in that pocket it tore loose. I thought I heard something drop on the floor at the time, but I didn't stop to see what it was."

Daisy's face had paled. She had heard of Boralmö. But she again had the diamond pin.

* * * * *

The next evening, at another meeting of the club, Jack had a motion put through ordering the secretary to write to Matsuki, in the name of the club, and tender its apologies.

Nat Kimball was the hero of this occasion, rising almost to heights of oratory as he told how the Jap had been misunderstood and badly treated in Cranford.

Afterward, Jack met Matsuki on more than one occasion and came to think pretty well of him; but he never was convinced that the Japanese jiu-jitsu is superior to, or even the equal of, the good, old-fashioned, honorable, American methods of wrestling and fighting.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 29, will be "Jack Lightfoot's All-Sports Team; or, How Lafe Lampton Threw the Hammer." This story tells of the field meet which the boys were talking about in the gym when the incidents of this story occurred. You will want to know how heroic Lafe came to the fore, and how the other fellows of Cranford conducted themselves in this lively story, and the girls as well. It is a story you will enjoy.

A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience.

THE EDITOR.

I have noticed in a number of Mr. Stevens' descriptions of the games played by the Cranford nine that frequently Jack Lightfoot saves the day by the use of the so-called "spit ball." Now, without setting myself up as a critic, I should like to say that I consider that as extremely bad policy on the part of the author. It does not seem right to make such a usually good fellow as Jack Lightfoot so far forget what sport is as to descend to a trick play to win a game. There is a lot of talk about the "spit ball," but when all is said and done, the "spit ball" is simply a trick that a thorough sportsman would be unwilling to use. It may seem all right to some players, but to me it certainly seems all wrong. And, besides that, it is contrary to the experience of players to have the "spit ball" work every time, as it seems to do with Lightfoot. That's what makes it so unsatisfactory a play; sometimes it works and more often it doesn't. This very trickiness of the ball, in my opinion, makes it unsportsmanlike, and I would like to hear from readers. I am sure a large number will agree with me that this play is not sportsmanlike, and that since it is not, Mr. Stevens be requested to have Jack Lightfoot cease using it. Hoping to hear from readers,

L. C. BYFIELD.

Norfolk, Va.

Your view of the "spit ball" is quite a surprise to us, and we think you are the first person who has objected to the ball as unsportsmanlike. The mere fact that the ball is uncertain does not make it unsportsmanlike. On the contrary, if it were a sure thing, the trick that never failed, it would cease to be sportsmanlike in any sportsman's belief. A perfectly dead shot, for instance, would not be a sportsman were it not for the fact that even a dead shot may occasionally fail. The "spit ball" is tricky; those who use it the most frequently never feel sure of it. But, in our understanding, that fact does not make it unsportsmanlike. However, you have started a discussion that should prove interesting, and we hope to hear from other readers about this subject.

ALL-SPORTS is all right; the finest stories for boys I have ever read, because they are clean and healthy and there is nothing in them that any boy need be ashamed to be seen reading. I am glad you have so many stories on baseball, and wish you could have more. We are all crazy on baseball in our town, and we would like to read about the game in every issue. I see that some of the people who write to you think the boys ought to go camping and so on. Well, I think if they played baseball all the time they would interest us more. We have a nice little team here and do some good work, beating the teams from the two neighboring towns. We are trying to form a small league, but we have a good many difficulties to overcome, and I do not know whether we will succeed in the work. Keep up the good work with ALL-SPORTS, and give us all the baseball we can get, say I!

BURTON KLIFFORD.

York, Pa.

Your letter, Burton, arrived close on the heels of one complaining that we had too many baseball stories; in our morning mail the letters lay one on top of the other, first a complaint of a feast and then a complaint of a famine. That shows you how easy it is to please people. You are a baseball enthusiast, but if we were to please only the baseball enthusiasts the other readers of ALL-SPORTS would cease to read the weekly. Our baseball stories are certainly well worth reading, but we fear that you will have to content yourself with a good deal of variety in the stories. Success to your team.

I have been reading ALL-SPORTS since the first number, and I have enjoyed every issue better than I have ever enjoyed any other boys' publication. I have taken great interest in the Cranford boys' gymnasium, because I think I need a little physical development, and I have been picking up hints and ideas for my own use from the stories. I would like to have you make any suggestions that you think would be of assistance to me after reading the measurements that I inclose. I am 5 feet 6 inches tall and weigh 114 pounds. My chest measurement is 33 inches; my waist, 27 inches, and my hips, 33 inches. What do you think I ought to do to develop myself?

CLARENCE C. ANDREWS.

Charleston, S. C.

Your condition, Clarence, is such that we should advise you to enroll yourself in some gymnasium where you can get systematic training. Your weight is six pounds shy of what it should be, and your chest measurement is two inches less than the average. You need systematic training, and the sooner you take it, the better. If you find it impossible to get in touch with any gymnasium at the present time, we would suggest that you invest in a pair of dumb-bells, not over two pounds in weight, and practice with them every morning for fifteen minutes. Then take a cold bath and follow that with a brisk rub down. Be careful to eat only nourishing food, and avoid tobacco in any form. Such a course of training will help you, but it will not do as much for you as regular gymnasium work, and we hope that you will begin the latter as soon as you can.

Seeing other people write, I thought I would do the same. Jack is certainly all right; same with Lufe and the fellow who thinks he is a Japanese expert. I think Japanese tricks are of some value in wrestling. Why don't you publish standing of clubs and scores after game? Our club voted which one of the boys' weeklies we liked best, and yours ran a hot race with the oldest of the lot, *Tip Top*. We will continue to read your fine weekly while it continues to be published. Jack and Tom are my favorites, and next follows Lufe.

CHARLES.

231 Seventh Street, Buffalo, N. Y.

It would be manifestly impossible to keep the standing of the clubs in the Four Town League at the head of the stories. From time to time the author mentions just where the Cranford team happens to be. As yet they have not been headed in the race, and stand a pretty good chance of winning out, hands down. We are pleased to know that ALL-SPORTS, while a newcomer in the field, holds its own pretty well with those that have for years had a firm grip on the affections of our boys.

I am a reader of ALL-SPORTS. I would like to let you judge my measurements. My age is 15½ years; weight, 113 pounds; height, 5 feet 5 inches; calves, 12¾ inches; thighs, 18½ inches; waist, 28½ inches; neck, 14 inches; wrists, 7 inches; forearms, right, 10 inches; left, 9¾ inches; biceps, right, 10 to 11¾ inches; left, 9¾ to 11¼ inches; chest, 32 to 35¼ inches; shoulders, 16 inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. How does my weight

and height compare with the rest of body? 3. How am I proportioned? 4. How does my chest compare with rest of the body? Next to *Tip Top* I like ALL-SPORTS best. Hoping to see this in print soon, I remain,
LOYAL TO ALL-SPORTS.

For a lad of your height, your weight is very close to the average. You should measure $13\frac{1}{4}$ inches around the calf; thighs, $19\frac{1}{2}$ inches; waist, $26\frac{1}{2}$ inches; chest, normal, 34 inches. Thus you can see that you should diligently strive to enlarge your chest. From time to time you will find various methods of doing so given in these columns. We appreciate your compliment with regard to ALL-SPORTS being close to the top.

I have read the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY ever since it started, and think it has no equal. I would like to ask you a few questions. I am 15 years old; weight, 125 pounds; height, 5 feet 9 inches; chest, normal, 29 inches; expanded, 32 inches. 1. How am I compared with the average boy of fifteen years? 2. What should I do to make my chest larger? Yours truly,
B. F. P. M.
Akron, Ohio.

You are very tall for your age, and in all probability will begin to fill out when you have attained your full height. But you realize that for one almost up to man's estate, your chest is very narrow. It should really be thirty-eight inches, normal. You should endeavor, by all means, to increase your lung capacity. Try the good old-fashioned way of standing erect in the morning, where you can inhale fresh air, throw the head well back, raise the arms rigidly from the sides, at the same time drawing in air slowly to the full capacity of the lungs. Then allow it to pass out almost as slowly when lowering the arms. Repeat half a dozen times. If you follow this habit religiously for several months, never eating breakfast until you have done this little stunt, you will be pleased with the result. We cannot be too positive in urging you to follow this course, for too rapid increase in stature often weakens the lungs. Let us know the result.

Accepting the challenge of Roderic Dhu, in No. 12 of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, I now write in defense of jiu-jitsu. Not, 'tis true, in defense of jiu-jitsu as Nat Kimball preaches it, for I think that the art in the hands of one of his ideas is dangerous. The object of the jiu-jitsuans is not to maim, as Nat thinks, but to subdue without harming their opponents; to show their opponents that they are at the jiu-jitsuans' mercy, but without harming them in the least. Neither is it brutal, because, though the pain, while it lasts, is most acute, it quickly passes away after pressure is relieved, and there are no bad after-effects unless a bone is broken or a ligament snapped. Not so with boxing. The object of the boxer is to put his opponent "to sleep" for a certain length of time, and then he is weak after he recovers, while a blow on the face often leaves them marked for some time to come.

JACK FAIRCHILD.

Portland, Ore.

Glad to hear from you, Jack. We invite a full and free discussion in our columns. While our sentiments are in line with those of Mr. Stevens, we confess that there may be much in the Japanese art that is good. Let others who do not believe Americans should descend to such sly tricks take up cudgels in defense of their opinions. Jack Fairchild certainly is honest in his views, and advances some pretty good arguments.

I have been reading over some of the letters written in your paper, and heartily agree with the sentiments expressed in most of them. Mr. Stevens has a very realistic manner of telling, or, rather, writing, a story, and he relates it in a way that appeals to everyone. One of the readers started a discussion about the Japanese method of defense, or jiu-jitsu. These are my views on the subject: We all know that the Japanese are, as a rule, inferior in size and, of course, strength, to a great many men, and in case they are imposed upon by one their superior in strength, this curious method of defense comes in handy. I compare them—without intending insult—to a skunk with his

effective means of defense. When attacked by one his superior in strength he employs his peculiar means of offense and usually wins out. Of course jiu-jitsu is a very dangerous thing in the possession of a man with an ungovernable temper, as one who is well versed in it could easily break a man's neck. Well, I guess I'll close by requesting Mr. Stevens to have the boys in a swimming tournament soon.

"A WOLVERINE."
Saginaw, Mich.

The more the merrier. Boys, let us hear what you think of jiu-jitsu as an American means of fighting. Mr. Stevens has many surprises in store for his readers, and may, before the summer is over, give us a lively tournament in the water. Already he has introduced water baseball as a novelty.

The baseball stories are what take hold best of all with me. They tell me at home that I'm fast turning into a regular "crank" in that line, and I guess it's so, because I seem to think of nothing else in the way of sport. And those stories you are giving us certainly are the right stuff. They are all to the good. Jack gives promise of developing into a first-class, all-round athlete, and perhaps some fine day we can get up a match between him and one of the Merriwells. That would be a hot time, I guess. Well, here's hoping ALL-SPORTS will have a long and prosperous life, and make lots of friends among the boys,
Owensboro, Ky.
GEORGE MCGUFFIN.

You may have the satisfaction, George, of knowing that you are not alone in your passion for baseball. A good many of us join with you in your love for the national game. We fear, however, that the meeting you look forward to can hardly occur, since Jack Lightfoot is only a boy, while Merriwell has been before the public over nine years, and must be looked upon as an experienced athlete, whose fame is only bounded by the two oceans.

I think you have taken the right stand on the subject of jiu-jitsu. What we American boys like is fair play, and it seems to me, the trickiness of jiu-jitsu is anything but fair play. Of course we are glad to see little Nat stand up for his ideas and say what he thinks. I should like to have you say a little more on the subject, as some of the fellows here are rather in favor of the Japanese method.

FRANK NEWCOME.

Worcester, Mass.

You will see, friend Frank, that we have a story in this number which answers your questions pretty well, and we know you will enjoy reading it. But to help you out a little, if you should find yourself in an argument on the subject, we quote here the published opinion of Mr. H. F. Leonard, instructor of wrestling at the New York Athletic Club, which appeared in an article in the June number of the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*:

"I say with emphasis and without qualification that I have been unable to find anything in jiu-jitsu which is not known to Western wrestling. So far as I can see, jiu-jitsu is nothing more than an Oriental form of wrestling. It is a boast of the exploiters of jiu-jitsu that through it any weakling could render helpless even a well-trained athlete, and that, too, without inflicting any injury whatever upon the victim. It would be an entertaining day in my life, indeed, were I to see such a feat accomplished."

In addition to this, here is what M. Takahira, the Japanese minister to the United States, has said on the general superiority of American methods to those of his own country, and his acknowledgment of how much the adoption of our methods in all lines has done to advance the Japanese:

"Nothing has contributed so much to the progress of Japan as the conscientious and sympathetic services of American educationalists who introduced their methods into my country. Our young men have been brought here to be educated, and they have carried back with them so high an admiration for things American that the Japanese to-day feel proud that you should call them 'The Yankees of the East.'"

HOW TO DO THINGS

By AN OLD ATHLETE.

Timely essays and hints upon various athletic sports and pastimes, in which our boys are usually deeply interested, and told in a way that may be easily understood. Just at present baseball is the topic in hand, and instructive articles may be found in back numbers of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, as follows: No. 14, "How to Become a Batter." No. 15, "The Science of Place Hitting and Bunting." No. 16, "How to Cover First Base." No. 17, "Playing Shortstop." No. 18, "Pitching." No. 19, "Pitching Curves." No. 20, "The Pitcher's Team Work." No. 21, "Playing Second Base." No. 22, "Covering Third Base." No. 23, "Playing the Outfield." No. 24, "How to Catch." (I.) No. 25, "How to Catch." (II.) No. 26, "How to Run Bases." No. 27, "Coaching and the Coach."

HOW TO UMPIRE.

In the course of these talks we have pointed out from time to time the not generally recognized importance of certain positions in the field, such as second base and outfield. In discussing the umpire and his duties, the task is not quite the same as in the case of second base and outfield, because every boy who has ever seen a game of baseball knows that the umpire is a man of some importance. Nevertheless, to the mind of the average amateur player, the umpire is not half as important as he thinks himself. This feeling is evident in a good many amateur games where the umpire is present because the rules say he should be present, but who wisely decides for the huskiest bunch of players because he has no desire to surrender his life for sweet principle's sake. More often than not, the umpire's task is not to display judgment, but discretion; not to render his decisions with a view to their fairness, but with a view to their probable effect on his own person.

Such a condition of affairs is to be regretted by every true lover of our national game. To hold the umpire in such contempt, to rely on a display of physical force to frighten him into giving a decision in favor of one party, is to admit once for all that such players are not in any sense of the word sportsmen, that the idea of good, clean sport is totally incomprehensible to them. Baseball is one of the most splendid examples of human skill in creating a game that is pure, clean sport, a source of pride to every true American. And one of the features that make it the good, clean game it is and should be is the fact that the umpire is given a position of such great importance. When men reach such a height in a game that they willingly leave the decision of matters of dispute to a man chosen by all the players, it indicates an appreciation and desire for real sport that should make us proud that all men know baseball as the "American game." When boys or men ignore the real first principles of the game by intimidating and disobeying the umpire they show that they are a long, long way from being real Americans and real sportsmen.

The following quotations from the playing rules of the game will show just what the umpire should be in a game:

"Rule 60—The umpire is the representative of the league and as such is authorized and required to enforce each section of this code. He shall have power to order a player, captain or manager to do, or omit to do, any act which in his judgment is necessary to give force and

effect to one or all of these rules, and to inflict penalties for violations of the rules as hereinafter prescribed.

"Rule 61—There shall be no appeal from any decision of the umpire, on the ground that he was not correct in his conclusion as to whether a batted ball was fair or foul, a base runner safe or out, a pitched ball a strike or ball, or in any other play involving accuracy of judgment; and no decision rendered by him shall be reversed except that he shall be convinced that it is in violation of one of these rules. The captain shall alone have the right to protest against a decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with a section of these rules.

"Rule 62—Under no circumstances shall a captain or player dispute the accuracy of the umpire's judgment and decision on a play."

These quotations from the rules of the game show plainly what a responsible position the umpire holds and by what authority his decisions are backed up.

Because of its importance the position of umpire can be fairly filled only by a man who thoroughly knows the game and has had special training for his position. His duties, as a glance at the rules show, are many and varied. His decisions are final. What he says goes, and no one can gainsay it. If the umpire declares a ball a strike and still sticks to his opinion after the captain has questioned his decision, no power can make that ball anything but a strike. Every man on the grand stand might howl that the ball was not a strike, but if the umpire refused to alter his decision, a strike that ball would remain for all time.

You can see that a man who has such powers should be one who knows what he is talking about. Hence, as the umpire is chosen by both teams, each captain should agree on no one but a man fitted to hold the position.

The umpire must enforce the letter of the laws of the game. A ruling may seem to him unfair, but he must make it if it complies with the letter of the code accepted by the major leagues. The laws are there, and it is the umpire's business to enforce them rigidly. He is not responsible for the laws, but for their enforcement. He should have the playing laws at his fingers' ends. He should make his decisions promptly and pay no attention to comments and make no apologies to players for his decisions. He must follow the ball closely, give every player a reasonable doubt, but when he makes his decision, he should not alter it unless it be clearly shown that his decision was at variance with the rules. The umpire should never hesitate in enforcing the rules, and for this reason most professional umpires have as little to do with players as possible. To do himself justice the umpire must be in good physical condition and take pride in his work. He should always be in some position where he can see the whole play, but is out of the way of the players.

Since the greater part of his work consists in calling out his decision in regard to the ball, an umpire should have a perfect system of calls. The best way is to call out strikes as: "Strike one;" "Strike two;" "Out." Or, "Ball one;" "Ball two;" "Ball three;" "Take your base." By saying what the ball is before the number, attention is fixed on the decision. The crowd knows what has gone before. By calling out a number, on the other hand, the crowd is sometimes confused and cannot tell whether it is a ball or a strike.

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